GERALD VANN, O.P.

MORALS AND MAN

SHEED AND WARD

As Father Vann notes in his Preface, it is characteristic of our age that we tend to accept our ideas ready-made—something akin to mental frozen food packages, with little of their merit. On all sides, twentieth-century man is bombarded: press, radio, television, motion pictures, the theatre—all combine to form what are, in the final analysis, channels not of information, but of a gently—or not so gently—couched "coercion." "We are," Father Vann believes, "almost in the position of the children in *Brave New World,* having opinions pumped into them as they sleep." The danger here becomes one of subhumanity. "With so much to occupy the surface of the mind and imagination, so much work and so much play," Father Vann speculates on whether it may not indeed be possible "to pass one's whole life without really thinking at all."

Father Vann has chosen to place his emphasis on the philosophical rather than the theological, though the latter has certainly not been excluded. His appeal is to "reason" and his discussion on ground common to all "reasonable mortal beasts." As an initial step toward being *human,* he suggests a scrutiny of our assumptions and an inquiry into absolutes. In particular, he warns Christians that religion provides no substitute for thought. He stresses further that, as a relationship with God, religion comprises the *whole* of life, with implications extending to every aspect of human nature; that an action cannot be "non-religious," only religious or irreligious.

Here, as in all his writing, Father Vann "sees far into the heart of things, and writes always memorably of what he finds there." *(Manchester Guardian)*

$3.50

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SHEED AND WARD • NEW YORK

First published by Longmans Green 1937 under the title Morals Makyth Man

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 60-12878

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PRIOR PROVINCIAL'S
DIE 28 MAII 1959

REVISED EDITION

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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PREFACE

" Man is all symmetry," said George Herbert; the statement, true enough still in the context he gave it, would hardly suggest itself as a general description of man in the world of to-day. The modern poet leaves perfection to his betters, and asks less for human nature:

God thou great symmetry,
Who put a biting lust in me
From whence my sorrows spring,
For all the frittered days
That I have spent in shapeless ways
Give me one perfect thing.

One perfect thing salvaged from the confusion and shapelessness of our life, our world; it is what we are all asking, and what contemporary national and international affairs, and personal problems, laugh at us for asking. We can make symmetry in stones, if we cannot always see sermons; we cannot make symmetry of our world and ourselves. Experience has helped us little; and indeed, as Bacon remarked, experience is of scant use in these matters without reason and judgment: " expert men can execute and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned ".

If the present study attempts to discuss modern problems in the light of ancient as well as modern wisdom, it is because the problems of to-day are in essentials still the problems of other ages and because wisdom is ageless. What is here aimed at is the presentation of a point of view:

attempting to argue indeed but not to bludgeon; a statement, not an apologetic. Baron von Hügel, hailed in one issue of *The Times* as the " greatest apologist of the Roman Church", remarked in the next that, having hoped to do well in the dog class, he was disconcerted to find himself given first prize among cats: a Dominican may perhaps be permitted to make the sentiment his own.

To try to exclude theology altogether from the view here put forward would have been to parody it. But the emphasis in the first part of the book, and in some of the later chapters, has been on philosophy, the appeal has been to reason; and if this has meant that the presentation of many points fails to give a full statement of christian teaching, on the other hand it has allowed of keeping the discussion on ground common to all " reasonable mortal beasts ".

The first part of the book is an elaboration of papers read to the Aquinas Societies of London and Leicester; some of the later chapters have appeared, in substance, in *Blackfriars*, *Colosseum*, *The Month*, *Reconciliation;* I wish to thank the editors of these reviews for their kindness in permitting me to reprint the articles here. I wish also to express my deep gratitude to the friends whose patient help and encouragement enabled me to remove so many faults from the book, and to publish it.

G. V.

Laxton, 22 November, 1937

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

Mr. T. S. Eliot has put it on record that he "cannot bear to re-read his critical prose": for oneself, *si parva licet*, etc., one has to admit more simply and sweepingly that one finds it extremely difficult to read any of one's own prose. The difficulty may be the greater if the prose was written long ago: inevitably during the intervening years one's interests, attitudes of mind, modes of thought and expression will have undergone some change, emphases will have shifted, once-familiar ground may seem strange, once-dominant ideas be found to have yielded their place to other, newer ones.

It has seemed best, therefore, to leave the present work, which was first published in 1938 under the title *Morals Makyth Man*, substantially unchanged: but some of the original pages have been deleted, a few new ones have been added, the style has sometimes been modified, and a number of obvious matter-of-fact corrections have been made where references in the original edition to current events or institutions needed bringing up to date.

PART ONE

The Theory

CHAPTER I

The Need of a Theory

"GREENHORNS" said Roger Bacon, "adore universals." The plain man views with suspicion the absorption in the abstract, the contempt of the "Particular and Fleeting", which are so often characteristic of the philosopher; he is apt to regard the thinker as just a "polytechnician" as Maurois put it, a man who "believes that all beings, animate or inanimate, can be rigorously defined and subjected to algebraic calculation"; immediate awareness of the world, he feels, is sacrificed to the unreality of academic reasoning:

> *that false secondary power*
> *By which we multiply distinctions, then*
> *Deem that our puny boundaries are things*
> *That we perceive, and not that we have made.*

But not all philosophers are spiders. And on the other hand the finding of unity, the establishment of order, are the concern of thought; we do not want to be like the girl in the *Crock of Gold* who "thought in kinks and spoke in spasms"; it is well to have the ordered thought before the action, the look before the leap. The feeling to-day is that we have little or no idea where we are leaping, what we are aiming at or ought to be aiming at; the good old days are gone, the days of majestic prosperity, of jaunty jingoism,

of moral self-complacency; nobody to-day could seriously cry "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world!".

"Confused and tormented by cataclysmic events in contemporary history," writes Dr Reinhold Niebuhr, "the 'modern mind' faces the disintegration of its civilization in alternate moods of fear and hope, of faith and despair. The culture of modernity was the artefact of modern civilization, product of its unique and characteristic conditions, and it is therefore not surprising that its minarets of the spirit should fall when the material foundations of its civilization begin to crumble. Its optimism had no more solid foundation than the expansive mood of triumphant capitalism and naturally gives way to confusion and despair when the material conditions of life are seriously altered. Therefore the lights in its towers are extinguished at the very moment when light is needed to survey the havoc wrought in the city and the plan of rebuilding."[1] All is certainly not right with the world.

But it is not easy to say precisely what is wrong with the world. We can talk about economic and political crises; or about the tragedy of decaying culture, of a social morality forgotten or derided, the dwindling of churches, the decay of religion. But these things are perhaps the diverse effects of a single organic disease; where is the germ? And supposing that we can rightly diagnose the disease, what are we individually to do about it? Voltaire made his hero Candide decide to give up philosophy and great ambitions and cultivate his back garden; G. B. Shaw in his *Little Black Girl* did the same. Are we to agree with them, to leave cosmic crises to look after themselves, to retreat from Armageddon in good time? What indeed can I as an individual do about revolutions and crises? But this line of argument is open to serious objections. We cannot, even if we wish, live in complete isolation; our own back garden abuts on to those of too many other people. We are all to some degree children of our age. We

[1] *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, p. 13.

have inherited a set of ideas, taboos, tastes, beliefs; an outlook, a code of conventions. We may possess enough independence of character to rise above this lowest common multiple; we cannot wholly rid ourselves of it. We are incorporated in family, friendships, religion, country. We are all passengers on some sort of ship and we sink or sail with it. And even if we could find a completely secluded garden in which to grow our cabbages, their size and shape and species, and the order of their growing, and the destination of their maturity would have to be decided : we should at least have to plan out our own lives, to form our own philosophy.

I may argue that I simply earn my living, I make friendships, I marry and bring up my children, and for all this I need nothing more elaborate than the ordinary ideas and rules current around me : I don't swindle people, I tell the truth, I am a respectable citizen. But already there are in fact complications. How do I know that these ideas are sound ideas, or at any rate the best ideas? How do I know that they are sufficient equipment for all possible needs? Is it in any case dignified to accept them without scrutiny, without making them part of myself by arguing to them in my own mind? It is in fact characteristic of our world that it tends to accept its ideas ready made. Press, cinema, wireless, television, all the ordinary channels of information tend to become instead instruments of coercion. We are almost in the position of the children in *Brave New World,* having opinions pumped into them as they sleep. Censorship or commercial and other interests try to some extent to regulate what we shall read or see and what not; conventions and laws to regulate what we shall do and what not; and we cannot but recognize that there is danger here of subhumanity, just as we cannot but recognize that with so much to occupy the surface of the mind and imagination, so much work and so much play, it is possible to pass one's whole life without really thinking at all, without bothering about the major problems of

life, without asking what it is about and where it is leading.

Suppose then a man upon whom the horror of his previous lack of independent thought has suddenly dawned: I will start, he says, by finding out what things really are—what is the world, what is man, what is the soul? What are art, literature, beauty? What are wealth and happiness and love? He asks for a definition of man: biologist, psychologist, moralist, politician, economist, eugenist, preacher, all have different ideas; the bewildered inquirer stops to sort things out. That is indeed the present need: there is more information, more knowledge of fact, available to-day than ever before; but this means that it is more than ever necessary to sort things out. The chaos of society comes of the chaos of unsorted knowledge; but how reduce a mass of facts to order? The inquirer will have to go on to ask the end or purpose of the things whose natures he has been studying, and again he will receive many different answers. But man cannot simultaneously have numberless different ends; he must have some ultimate purpose which includes them all. Order means unity, and a multiplicity of things is reduced to order by being reduced in some way to one.

Philosophy is this view of things as a whole; their what and why and whither. Even if we are to leave the world to look after itself, still we must discover the what and why and whither of ourselves if we are to make any success of the business of living. There would be less difficulty, though less excitement, if we were like other beings, directed by iron physical laws. If one could discover the nature of man and his inevitable reactions to stimuli as a botanist does of plants or a chemist of chemicals, if a man just grew into a definite invariable completion as an acorn grows into an oak, there would be fewer problems. But it is not usually thought to be so simple.[2] Most people at least hold that man has free will, that he can choose for himself what end to pursue, to some degree at least, and hence human beings

[2] Cf. *infra*, Ch. III.

do not work out according to pattern, they bring about all sorts of disasters and flounder in all sorts of theories about themselves and everything else; physical necessity becomes moral obligation or duty, and a whole new series of problems arises.

But why, again, all this pother about philosophizing over so simple a matter? A man must try to make a career for himself and find happiness: why not let him get on with it? Is not the philosopher just making difficulties? No, we spend our time pursuing what we think to be happiness only to find, often enough, when we get there that it is not happiness at all; we devote our energies to achieving success in a career only to find that it is the wrong career. We had not investigated the what and the why. Again, we may admit that there is such a thing as moral obligation; we may even permit ourselves to talk about sin and evil. But we say that our English code of morals, the maxims we learned as children, are sufficient; there is no need to think things out any further. And then something occurs to which none of these handy maxims seems to apply, and we are at a loss. We are bound then to think things out; not each particular case of each particular type as it occurs, but the general types of cases, the scheme of life as a whole that we are to try actively to bring about. We have to think out an order, a synthetized scheme, of the principles of living.

In an earlier age it was held that economics, the science of wealth and how it is acquired, was a physical science; that things like labour, wages, price, worked according to strict and immutable laws; that the amount a man receives for his day's work, for example, was as rigidly the result of a set of existing circumstances as water is the result of combining hydrogen and oxygen. This was a convenient doctrine for the people who were getting rich quick, since it forbade them to do anything about those who were becoming increasingly poorer. There is, of course, truth in the theory: the law of supply and demand does determine

price; but it is not the whole truth. One can interfere with economic laws. And there is no such thing as the economic man invented by the theorists: the man wholly governed by their immutable laws. It was held, for example, that population was regulated mechanically by supply and demand for labour: over-population was impossible. This theory was attacked by Malthus as early as 1798. and to-day is not considered. But it provides a text from which to move on to a further point. Economic considerations to-day have much to say about the size of families. But once grant that ethics, the science of what is morally right, refuses to sanction the course of action proposed by economics, and what is a man to do? Which science is he to obey? One set of principles must be higher, have more authority, than the other: which is it? One can decide only by being a philosopher; by looking at the problem as a whole, and so deciding that, while man is both an economic animal and a moral animal, the latter aspect is the more important; that he may not seek economic well-being at the expense of moral goodness. Similar problems arise in the sphere of politics: the morality as opposed to the political utility of war, empire, taxations, the tactics of parties; the danger of putting the political cart before the ethical horse.

A man then who wants to be really human and not a machine or a child, has to find for himself philosophical principles which may offer him criteria in every department of life.

Is philosophy enough?

For the christian the answer must be no. He can rightly say that his main questions of what and whither are already answered for him; these things then, he might argue, he accepts; he need not bother his head any further about them: he worships God in church every Sunday; let him get on with his job on Monday. Such an attitude, however, would represent a fundamental misconception: the divorce of religion from life. It is not enough to accept a number of

truths about God; we have to apply them, to live them. We have not merely to say "I believe that God became man", but to ask what bearing this fact has on human existence. Religion cannot be merely something one does on Sundays; it must comprise the whole of life, the directing of all one's life to God, and thus every action is either religious or irreligious, nothing is merely non-religious. The business of synthesis or ordering, the sub-ordination of one science to another (the "sacred science") still remains to be done.

Theology is thus essential. A man cannot, merely by accepting the christian dogmas, proceed forthwith to put them into practice; he cannot be expected to see at once their bearing upon the conduct of human life. What is the implication, for example, of the doctrines of the Trinity or the Incarnation for human behaviour? The fact that so many diverse answers have been given is proof enough that the answer is not immediately obvious. The broad moral principles, again, are given; but the application of these to the varying incidents of daily life is a thing which has to be thought out; and the dependence of the moral principles on the doctrinal truths has also to be elicited if life is to be unified. All this is theology; and in this sense every man must be a theologian. The business of particularization and of synthesis is not a luxury for leisure hours; it is a vital necessity, for to preach Christ without bothering about the pattern of the Christ-life on earth is to beat the air with wings; it is to state the premises of many problems without attempting to suggest the way in which the problems are to be faced.

It is precisely on the grounds of its remoteness from the actual problems of life that religion is so often criticized to-day. The churches, so the critics hold, have been left high and dry; and are incapable now of helping man in his search for an answer to his problems. "Religion stands at the cross-roads" writes Professor Macmurray. "Through-out the world the parties of social progress are, in general,

either passively or actively anti-religious. Organized religion, on the defensive, tends to range itself, actively or passively, with the conservatives and the reactionaries. But the tide of social evolution cannot for ever be dammed by the dykes of vested interest. The progressive forces are bound to win; and it looks as though the bursting of the dykes would be quick and catastrophic. If in that hour religion is still found on the side of reaction, as it was in Russia, it must suffer almost total eclipse. Its existing forms will be doomed to destruction."[3] It is not only those outside the Church who have deplored the at least apparent alliance of religion with vested interests. The author of *Peace and the Clergy* writes: "The proletariat feel their existence threatened by the sacrifices which capitalism and militarism impose upon them, and what embitters them more than anything is the idea they have that the Church is in league with these powers."[4] But the criticism goes deeper than any question of the behaviour of christians. "A socially imperilled generation", writes Dr Niebuhr, "will have both the inclination and the right to dismiss profound and ultimate interpretations of life which are not made relevant to the immediate problems of social justice. Men whose very existence is imperilled and whose universe of meaning is reduced to chaos by the social maladjustments of a technical society, may be pardoned if they dismiss, as a luxury which they cannot afford, any 'profound' religion which does not concern itself with these problems."[5] Of liberal christianity he writes: "Its energy for some decades has been devoted to the task of proving religion and science compatible, a purpose which it has sought to fulfil by disavowing the more incredible portion of its religious heritage and clothing the remainder in terms acceptable to the 'modern mind'. It has now discovered rather belatedly that this same modern mind, which only yesterday seemed to be the final arbiter of truth, beauty,

[3] *The Structure of Religious Experience*, p. 9.

[4] p. 138. [5] *op. cit.* p. 150.

and goodness, is in a sad state of confusion to-day, amid the debris of the shattered temple of its dreams and hopes. In adjusting itself to the characteristic credos and prejudices of modernity, the liberal church has been in constant danger of obscuring what is distinctive in the christian message and creative in christian morality. Sometimes it fell to the level of merely clothing the naturalistic philosophy and the utilitarian ethics of modernity with pious phrases.

" Modern culture is compounded of the genuine achievements of science and the peculiar ethos of a commercial civilization. The superficialities of the latter, its complacent optimism, its loss of the sense of depth and the knowledge of good and evil (the heights of good and the depths of evil) were at least as influential in it if not more influential than the discoveries of science. Therefore the adjustment of modern religion to the ' mind ' of modern culture inevitably involved capitulation to its thin ' soul ' . . . The christian ideal of love became the counsel of prudential mutuality so dear and necessary to a complex commercial civilization. The Christ of christian orthodoxy . . . became the good man of Galilee, symbol of human goodness and human possibilities without suggestion of the limits of the human and the temporal—in short, without the suggestion of transcendence."[6] Failure to retain the sense of the " depths of evil " means an unwarranted optimism; and liberal christianity thus assumed " that the law of love needed only to be stated persuasively to overcome the selfishness of the human heart. The unhappy consequence of that optimism was to discourage interest in the necessary mechanisms of social justice at the precise moment in history when the development of a technical civilization required more than ever that social ideals be implemented with economic and political techniques . . . The purely moralistic approach of the modern Church to politics is really a religio-moral version of *laissez-faire* economics."[7]

[6] *op. cit.* pp. 15, 25. [7] *op. cit.* p. 181.

Orthodox christianity, according to the same writer, arrived at the same end by a different road. Three factors brought about this result. First, "sacramentalism"; in which "the natural world (including, unfortunately, the social orders of human history) is celebrated as the handiwork of God; and every natural fact is rightly seen as an image of the transcendent, but wrongly covered so completely with the aura of sanctity as to obscure its imperfections"; secondly, pessimism had a similar influence: "the fact of the 'sinfulness of the world' was used as an excuse for the complacent acceptance of whatever imperfect justice a given social order had established"; and finally acosmism: "reaction to naturalism drives christianity into an other-worldly dualism in which the transcendent ceases to have relevance to the historical and temporal process".[8]

We should be ill-advised if we light-heartedly dismissed criticisms such as these as baseless and unwarranted.[9] But the point for the moment is simply their relevance in showing that, certain christian facts accepted, all discussion is not at an end. We have always to examine for ourselves the relevance of the facts to the problems of everyday life, and the whole lesson of these criticisms is in the light they throw upon the evil consequences of neglecting this duty. Theological speculation, in the sense of conscious reference of supernatural truth to everyday life, is a duty incumbent upon us, and we cannot escape the necessity of thinking things out for ourselves on the plea of divine revelation.

It is the claim of the thomist that St Thomas can help us both in the task of philosophical inquiry, arguing from what is given in experience, and in this labour of theological deduction, arguing from what is given in revelation, to solve our problems. Here we shall be mainly concerned

[8] *op. cit.* pp. 43, 151, 31.

[9] This book is, equivalently, an attempt to argue that, while these three dangers certainly threaten christianity in practice, they are very far from being compatible with it in theory.

with what his philosophy has to offer; though we shall have frequent occasion to turn to his theology, and must deal with it at the conclusion of our survey, since only there can we find his ultimate and complete view of life. That philosophy is in no way dependent on the experimental sciences; it is not affected by discoveries in physics; its principles are beyond any scientific formulae, and they are therefore in no way tied to any particular age or to the acceptance of a particular scientific theory. It is misleading therefore to talk of going *back* to St Thomas. If one were to advocate some physical theory held by him, which had long since been discredited, one would be going back. But the theory the thomist advocates is a metaphysical theory; and what we try to do when we accept it is to go forward, discovering for an outlook, an attitude to reality, which is itself timeless ever new applications and new enrichments—applications to the problems of modern life, enrichments from the findings of modern thought and experiment and research.

And the point to be emphasized is that not only is thomism capable of application to modern needs and patient of enrichment by modern experience, but of its very nature it demands these things. The thomist cannot be content to browse over thomism as St Thomas left it. Study of St Thomas does not merely mean knowing what St Thomas said about this and that; it does not mean being able to talk scholastic jargon. It means acquiring a certain outlook, assimilating and making one's own a certain set of principles and so coming to possess a habit of or capacity for judging about things, things of every sort and description, not theological things merely, or abstruse speculative points, but the things that occur every day and all day. It means having a point of view about literature and art, about films and film-stars, about wages and wage-earners, about aeroplanes and H-bombs and war and worship, and, in general, the world. We all of course make judgements about these things; sometimes our judgements

are based purely on prejudice, perhaps on other people's prejudices; but even if they are not, even if they are based on purely rational grounds, we shall not be complete until all our judgements are reducible to a single judgement, a single point of view, in other words until we have achieved order and synthesis, a theory, in our thought.

Thomism does at any rate provide a central doctrine, a principle which, outside temporal mutations itself, affords a world-view, an outlook, in which the experience of to-day can be coherently judged, ordered and synthetized. That is the great extrinsic argument for considering its intrinsic claims to truth. It remains to outline that principle and its more immediate applications.

CHAPTER 2

The Thomist Principle

IT WAS the opinion of Lord Acton that "not the devil, but St Thomas Aquinas was the first Whig". What frees this alarming statement from the charge of sheer falsehood is the fact that St Thomas was realist enough to want to put a check upon the power of the sovereign, being no lover of Leviathans. His political realism was paralleled in the other departments of his philosophy. Immanuel Kant had much to say about the dogmatists who preceded him: the high-flown people who wove metaphysical webs out of principles which they never attempted to prove and could not in any case, as he thought, hope to prove. Since the *Critique* it has been the accepted task of philosophers to prove man's ability to know anything, and the fact that there *is* anything other than himself to know, before proceeding any further in the business of synthetizing and explaining the data of experience. Modern followers of St Thomas have shown that the problem of knowledge can in

fact be dealt with from his own writings, though he himself had no reason to lay especial stress upon it. But in this century of war and disorder and distress, of chaos so widespread and so extreme, it may well seem too remotely academic to be asked to argue about the reality of these things, to try to prove the existence of bodies when they are being riddled with bullets or pulverised and disintegrated by bombs. Philosophy, we feel, must be able to throw some light upon the state of affairs, afford us some idea of the direction to be pursued, offer us principles upon which to found a re-establishment of order, if it is to be worth while. A theory is not necessarily true because it works—so at least the thomist holds, together with all upholders of an absolute—but it is more than likely to be false if it neither helps to explain the common experience of mankind nor offers a workable scheme for the successful ordering of men's lives. St Thomas was a realist in the sense of being fully alive to the facts and problems of existence; and since any sketch of his philosophy to be made within the compass of a few pages must necessarily omit much, and should presumably aim at delineating some particular aspect of his thought, it will be enough here to try to suggest the perfection of synthesis which unifies the whole of his thought and the consequent possibility of finding in it a principle of order and redemption for the world of to-day.

"All men naturally desire to know" said Aristotle. In *Tristram Shandy* the same great truth is differently expressed: "When great or unexpected events fall out upon the stage of this sublunary world"—the unexpected event in this case being the falling of the hot chestnut into Phutatorius's breeches—"the mind of man, which is an inquisitive kind of a substance, naturally takes a flight behind the scenes, to see what is the cause and first spring of them." In Greece, investigation as to the cause and spring of things in general concerned itself first with what was later called the material cause, the stuff out of which the manifold of

things was formed. Thales thought this first principle to be water; an opinion, says the venerable Antonius Goudin, which would seem to have come from the Egyptians, who were indebted for the fertility of their land to the inundations of the Nile. Anaximenes, on the contrary, was in favour of air; Heraclitus the Obscure, of fire, the divine spirit which knows and directs all things. But one of the characteristics of fire is its restlessness, its unceasing movement; and Heraclitus is in consequence the father of all the philosophies of the *devenir pur*, the philosophies of becoming. In the juxtaposition of this theory that all is becoming with the contrary Parmenidean position that only being is, non-being is not, and there is no becoming, is the formulation of the first great antinomy. Either, it seemed, one must say with Parmenides that all movement, and therefore the whole phenomenal universe, is illusion, or on the other hand one must cling to the reality of movement and jettison the reality of being, static, absolute, intelligible. It is on the principle which enabled Aristotle to offer a solution of this antinomy that the fabric of thomism is built up. In every entity other than God, Aristotle held, there is composition of two elements, the actual and the potential. The meaning of the terms is most readily grasped by example. The kitten is not possessed of the full perfection of felinity; but it will normally achieve this perfection, it will become a full-grown cat, because there is in it the capability of so doing, the capability of becoming a cat and not a cobra. It is potentially a cat. Again, "Shakespeare in the womb" to use Fr D'Arcy's example, "had not actually the intelligence to write *Hamlet*, but he would never have written it had he been initially without any capacity to do so". He was potentially a poet. This same distinction is expressed in other terms in the analysis of the make-up of material things. Aristotle there speaks of the constitutive elements as *bare matter* and *substantial form*; and again the meaning of the terms is best seen in examples. A log of wood, put upon the fire, passes through a variety of changes

and becomes ashes. There has been, when the process is complete, a passage from one term to another, from one sort or kind of being to another; and this implies that beneath the process and as a subject of the changes involved there is a reality capable of being now wood and now ashes, as, to use another example, we might say of a block of marble that it was capable of becoming either a statue of David or a table in a tea-shop. There is, in other words, an element in things which is of itself indeterminate but capable of a variety of determinations. It is this indeterminate and determinable element which is called matter; the determinant which is called form. Aristotle further remarks that the determinable without the determinant would be in a state of privation and, metaphorically, of desire; and so movement is explained in terms of a passage from privation to possession, to the fulfilment of desire in the actual reception of a determination; the marble block actually becomes the statue of David, the acorn actually becomes an oak. The distinction between matter and form is thus one application of the wider distinction between potentiality and actuality; matter is regarded as potential with regard to form. And while this latter term had first been taken by Aristotle in the narrow material sense of "shape," as the form of a statue is the shape of the statue, he now enlarges the idea, so that the primary sense of the word comes to be that of "specific determinant", the element which makes a thing this kind of thing rather than that, an oak-tree and not a caterpillar. This was called by St Thomas "substantial form"; and it is in this sense that the word will be used here.

Now from the analysis of actual and potential, Aristotle had argued to the existence of an *Actus Purus*, a Being whose "essence is actuality" and in whom is "life most good and eternal". But in his discussion of the relation between the *Actus Purus* and the universe he is ultimately reduced to speaking in terms of final causality, expressed in the metaphor of appetition: the universal "desire" of the potential for actuality. His God remains a remote and

silent spectator. St Thomas, enlarging the aristotelean conception of potential and actual, was able to offer a more adequate solution, in which efficient causality also was included. There is in all material things, he holds, besides the composition of matter and form a further, existential, composition. The deepest expression of the distinction between actual and potential is found in terms of being. The thing, the *compositum*, of which matter and form are constituents, is itself potential with regard to the being whereby it is: the *quod est*, in St Thomas's terms, is other than the *quo est*. It is the *quo est*, being, which actualizes that which without it remains purely potential in the order of real existences. The *compositum* is, with regard to it, receptive, potential, the element which limits the entity to this or that grade of being; it is *esse*, being, which existentially actualizes it, which places it in the realm of really existing entities. There is, therefore, in the existing thing the potentiality to be or not to be, and the actuality of being; and these are really distinct since the determinable is really distinct from the determinant; the whole entity, regarded as a "what" is potential in respect to being as such.

This conclusion radically alters the aristotelean conception of God. St Thomas makes use of the famous argument "from movement"[1]—and Kant's attack upon the "Cosmological Proof" has not invalidated the claims of this argument to prove what St Thomas meant it to prove: the existence of a Pure Actuality (the connotations of the term being elsewhere elucidated). Whatever moves, he argues, is moved by something other than itself. For movement is the passage from potentiality to actuality; therefore that which is set in motion must be potential. But that which moves, transitively, must be actual, for a thing cannot act unless it first is. Since, then, a thing cannot be at one and the same time and in the same respect actual and potential,

[1] "Movement" being taken in the sense of any passage from potential to actual, whether physical (material) or spiritual (immaterial).

being and non-being, it follows that the potential must be moved to its actuality by that which is already actual. Now this series cannot be prolonged *ad infinitum*: there must eventually be found that which is not dependent but on which others depend; and this first Unmoved Mover we term God, Aristotle's Pure Actuality. But whereas Aristotle was forced to postulate the co-existence of an eternal potential, explaining the cosmic process in terms of the appetition of the potential for the actual, St Thomas on the other hand is now able to show the total dependence of the universe on the Pure Actuality (since every thing for him is potential in regard to existence), and so to argue to the necessity of creation *ex nihilo*. And for him, appetition becomes something more than a vague metaphor.

Pure Actuality can have no end or purpose outside itself, for this would imply the presence of potentiality. It is the *Movens Immobile*, the Unmoved Mover. But everything other than Pure Actuality is finite, potential, moving towards an actualization which is outside itself and which ultimately is seen to consist in participation in the goodness of God. For movement, activity, is only to be explained in terms of a sought end; that end is, for the agent, a good, congruous to it, for otherwise it would not seek it: and ultimately, since the series of final causes cannot be indefinitely prolonged, all particular ends resolve themselves into the one end which can be an end to them all, the one good which is the cause of all goodness, which is God. Now the goodness of God is infinite, simple; it cannot then be shared as such by the finite. But it can be shared in partial reflections, in multiplicity; and so it is that the beauty of God is reflected in the variety of the manifold, the perfection of God in the perfections proper to the different grades of beings. Every entity other than God, then, tends to this sharing of the perfection of the *Summum Bonum*; the relative, by reason of its relativity, has a tendency towards the Absolute; and the potentialities of the entity are actualized in so far as this process comes to completion. The Absolute

remains transcendent; the finite can never compass the Infinite; and the end remains outside it; but the *assimilari Deo* which is the end of creatures, the compassing of the likeness of God, is achieved by way of analogous imitation: "it is in so far as things have being that they are likened to God, who is Being Itself, whereas all other things are as it were but partakers of being"[2].

What precisely is the imitation of God's perfection in the case of man? Of the ultimate end to which divine revelation points, the wholly supernatural sharing in the intimate life of God in the beatific vision, we shall have to speak later. For the philosopher, the answer must lie in the examination of the potentialities which are to be found in the human person. "A thing becomes like to God's perfection in respect of everything which pertains to its proper goodness; and the goodness of a thing resides not only in its substantial being but in all the elements necessary to its full perfection, the accidentals which belong to its completion, and the activity proper to it, for this last also belongs to the perfection of the thing."[3]

The perfection or completion of itself is thus for St Thomas the end of everything. In that lies its happiness, and towards that therefore it is of its nature orientated. Not to reach that end is evil, for evil means privation of being. But not to be made for that end, to be orientated so to say in an opposite direction, is unthinkable:

For amiss he were made, who was made not for joy.

This doctrine of the desire and striving of all things for actuality is the philosophical expression of the first chapter of *Genesis,* of the Spirit of God brooding over the waters and causing the manifold forms to emerge from dark chaos; it is also of course in line with evolution, if a caveat be made excepting the spirit from the process and safeguarding the existence of real kinds. We of to-day have

[2] *Contra Gent.* III, xix. [3] *Contra Gent.* III, xxi.

much to learn from St Thomas's metaphysic of man. The idea of all the potentialities being brought to their completion, not separately and in rivalry but harmoniously, making for synthesis, the ultimate actuality of a completed personality, completed in unity, for unity is the end since it is being: this idea is, in practice at least, too often ignored. It follows immediately from the basic principle of the thomist theory that the ultimate real components of man are on the one hand bare matter, on the other the soul. There is, as they put it in the Middle Ages, only one substantial form in man. Soul and body, therefore, are not two separate things; still less is it true, on this theory, that the body is the prison of the soul and must be destroyed if the soul is to be liberated. There is one undivided entity, at once spiritual and physical; and its proper completion therefore comprises the completion of both these elements. For the philosopher, faced with the fact of death, there is here an insuperable difficulty; for the theologian the difficulty is solved by the doctrine of the resurrection of the body; for in the final completion of paradise, the full and perfect possession of unending life, wherein, in St Thomas's phrase, all desires are fulfilled, the physical or corporal potentialities reach their perfection in company with those of the soul.

To-day we are concerned again, not always from the wisest angle, with the rights of the body; but we do not always realize all we have lost. It is not primarily a question of physical fitness. In Lawrence's words: "We have lost almost entirely the great and intrinsically developed sensual awareness, or sense-awareness, and sense-knowledge, of the ancients"; "our conscious range is wide, but shallow as a sheet of paper".[4] We have thought

[4] *Apocalypse*, pp. 107, 105. Mr Henry Williamson writes in the same sense: "Could I but tell you of the glamour of those fled springtimes when the meadow grasses waved their plumes in the wind, among the ox-eye daisies and the sorrel. Of the nightingale singing in the copse at night! Many people on hearing the nightingale for the first time are disappointed; the

wisdom to consist in much cerebration, and we have despised intuition, the direct contact, or else have turned the senses into a plaything. To this latter evil the economic system has led us, with its exorbitant demands on time and attention during the day, so that when work is over and there is at last time to look about one at the world and see that it is good, exhaustion makes impossible anything more taxing than passive amusement. To the deliberate and complete despising of sense-awareness some writers exhort us on the plea that they are the channels whereby evil enters into the soul (which, unhappily, is true enough), the logical conclusion of their argument being that one should blind and deafen oneself and live in a cage to prevent all contact. It is thus that Wilde's Herod speaks: "But I will look at you no more. Neither at things nor at people should one look. Only in mirrors should one look, for mirrors do but show us masks."

This is a very different thing from the practical advice given by all ascetic writers. Shut your senses from the world, they tell us, if you would discover, and unite yourself with, the higher things. Obviously such a programme is often a necessity, as it is a commonplace of all mysticism. The mind of man is apt, in fact, to become absorbed in the manifold to the exclusion of the One; his heart to become

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bird's song is perfection of spirit; if it were a little less than perfection, it would move all human hearts at once. I pray for power to bring back that awareness into the human mind; I feel in my mind all the flowers and the songs of boyhood are stored, and I must pour them out; giving them shape and form in sentences which will ring in the hearts of all who read, and soften them, and bring back to them the simplicity and clarity of the child-heart. For the hope of the world, of the human race, is the child. Its young mind must be impressed with natural beauty, not dreary, dead facts of what kings died and when, and what $a^2 + b^2$ equals. The tissue of the child-mind must be free as the dove's breast-feather drifting in the sunlit air. But what do they do to the imagination of little children? They blench and wither it by forcing it to apprehend unintelligible facts. They strip the petals of the young blossom!" (*The Dream of Fair Women*, p. 126).

entangled in self-seeking in the beauties of the fleeting, and blind to the beauty that does not fade. Where there is less direct opposition there is still the danger of over-activity, and the necessity for periods of greater retirement lest the vision grow dim: complete seclusion may be the only possible means of catharsis as of discovery; while normally, for those moments devoted to the deliberate turning of the soul to God and search for union with him, the setting aside of the sensible and the mundane is an indispensable preliminary. But we have to beware of enlarging these practical expedients to the dimensions of a universal and metaphysical theory of life. The invisible things of God find entry to the soul through the visible. "Hearing, seeing, feeling, can hardly be evil in themselves, since they are part of the very organization of man's being; and it would be an ungracious act, to say the least, for the creature to disown as evil, or as inevitably productive of evil, those attributes with which the Creator has endowed him. . . . We might pronounce a suspension of all living to be our ideal, as being the nearest approach to not committing any offence. Yet such an idea is too grotesque to be tenable, though perhaps some such notion has visited the religious minds of the east. But we are saved from such a human extravagance by the figure of Christ, the eternal Christ-life, in our midst. . . . God himself provides these resources of beauty, on which we refuse to look. We must not impute evil to the innocent thing or creature of his act. Is not all the beauty we can manage to see but an addition to the store through which we become aware of him? . . . We cannot serve two masters, and if we establish a gloomy puritanical order of our own making, we must perforce give up the order of God."[5] St Thomas urges the student to despise no avenue of knowledge; in *Tristram Shandy* the same maxim is inculcated: "What hindrance, hurt or harm doth the laudable desire of knowledge bring to any man, if even from a sot, a pot, a fool, a stool, a winter-mitten, a truckle for a

[5] Gwendolen Plunket Greene: *The Prophet Child,* p. 101, sqq.

pulley, the lid of a goldsmith's crucible, an oil bottle, an old slipper or a cane chair?"

Another danger to be guarded against is the lack of appreciation of the absolute value of contemplation. " Instead of that speculative philosophy which is taught in the schools," wrote Descartes, and we pause to admit that its spirit had little in common with that of St Thomas, " we may find a practical philosophy by means of which . . . we can . . . render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature."[6] That philosophical outlook, combined with political jingoism and economic greed, has produced to-day an attitude to thought—has given, rather, a meaning to thought—in which contemplation for its own sake plays no part, and which was admirably summed up by a writer quoted in Mencken's *Americana* : " From the material and every other point of view there is no better investment than thinking ". So we have the man who is a success at selling stockings or vacuum-cleaners but who on any question of ultimates is mindless.

St Thomas's attitude is very different. Contemplation, vision of the truth, is for him an end in itself, is indeed *the* end. Action should follow from it and be directed by it; for, as Bacon pointed out, " the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned "; but, this means that the complete life is made up of contemplation and of action issuing from it, not that contemplation is of value only as issuing in action.

Full actuality in man, then, demands the perfection of body, senses, mind. It demands too the perfection of heart and will, for, as St Thomas put it, knowledge is only perfect when it passes into love. It demands, finally, the perfection of action. And the point for the moment is the right order as thomism sees it : that it is what one is that matters most. " What Does, What Knows, What Is " : Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, commenting in 1916 on Browning's *Death in the Desert*, said : " There is no mistaking what Browning

[6] *Discours*, VI.

means, nor in what degrees of hierarchy he places this, that and the other. . . . Does it not strike you how curiously men to-day, with their minds perverted by hate, are inverting that order?—all the highest value set on *What Does—What Knows* suddenly seem to be of importance, but only as important in feeding the guns, perfecting explosives, collaring trade—all in the service of *What Does*, of 'Get On or Get Out', of 'Efficiency'; no one stopping to think that 'Efficiency' is—must be—a relative term! . . . But still the whisper (not ridiculous in its day) will assert itself, that *What Is* comes first, holding and upheld by God."[7]

What Is—at once the object of philosophy and the object of practical endeavour. Thomism is the philosophy of being, not least in that it values being (let us say, in the human sphere, the person) above efficiency and productivity and results; because in this single principle of potentiality and actuality, being and non-being, its problems in every department of thought are resolved. Unity, goodness, truth, beauty, these things are but different aspects of that single reality. Beauty is being, being which has not been robbed of its three qualities: wholeness, harmony, radiance, in which according to St Thomas beauty consists. The whole thing, not stunted or maimed but harmoniously developed and fulfilled, not warped or disordered but radiant with health, physical or spiritual, or, what corresponds in inanimates to these, complete fulfilment: this is the beautiful thing. And ugliness is non-being; the privation of being, because the privation of these due qualities; as moral evil is the privation of that being we call goodness. To say that evil is non-being is not of course to adopt the struthiocameline tactics of Christian Science and deny, let us say, the reality of pain. Disease exists, just as sin exists. But as sinful action as a physical entity is good (and indeed the sinful action is often physically identical with the virtuous action) and is the striving after or desiring of a good thing, its evil consisting in the lack of right use of the physical or

[7] *On the Art of Reading* (1933), p. 7.

of right ordering towards the good, and therefore in a lack of being; so a bunion is being, and therefore of itself good, and doubtless beautiful, but in its context it denotes a lack, a privation of the proper shape and texture and complexion of a foot, and is therefore in that sense a lack of being.

It is, then, on the distinction of actual and potential in regard to the essence of the finite and its relation to the Infinite that the thomist ethic is built. A thing is good in so far as it becomes likened to God through the achieving of its perfection, its actualization. And with all creatures other than man, and spirits, this presents no difficulty in the elucidation of means to end, for the way is dictated by nature and instinct. But man is rational and self-determining. The problem of free will arises, and natural necessity becomes moral obligation. Moreover, the complex structure of the human being and the variety of his potentialities make right direction of all activity, even when the end is truly apprehended, a matter of infinite difficulty. It is no good trying to achieve perfection in one department of life and ignoring another; the whole will be spoiled, as with King John, of whom the schoolboy said that he was considered a bad king because he was viscous in his private life. It is easy to be mistaken about the end of life. But suppose we have a right estimate of that, and the will to attain it, in what does the good life consist? Clearly, if the end is the actualization of our potentialities, it will consist in activity congruous with the attainment of that actualization. The right action is what is according to nature, i.e. to reason, and Ronsard was surely urging a moral lesson when he counselled the visitor to the grave of Rabelais, the *bon biberon*, to lay not lilies however freshly plucked but cups and flagons on the tomb. But goodness is not in isolated actions. For just as science is not a mere accumulation of facts but the actualization of the faculty of right judgement, so virtue is not merely a succession of good actions but the actualization of the faculty of willing

and acting well. And just as knowledge is one of the accidental perfections which go to make up the total actualization of the personality, the substance, as a whole, so of virtue; and it is in the acquisition of virtue, the good disposition, that actualization in the ethical sphere is most apparent and most important—the perfection of being under its aspect of goodness. For St Thomas, the good is the primary concept, the right is determined by it and not *vice versa*; and the way to moral completion is ultimately the way, through asceticism and struggle, to a unified orientation of the will towards the Infinite Good.

Man, said Aristotle, is a political animal (which is not the same thing as a politician). The thomist theory of politics should be touched on here so far as is necessary to remark its debt to the principle under consideration.

Thomism stands half-way between the contrary theories of liberalist individualism, which admits no natural duty in the individual towards society, and collectivism, which admits no rights of individuals against society. The fact is that man cannot as a rule live the best life in isolation; he needs society; and this exigency of nature connotes a corresponding duty towards society. As an individual he forms a unit of a larger whole, and he is therefore obliged—morally, for politics is subordinate, in the thomist view, to ethics—to work for the actualization of the whole. On the other hand, as a person, a self-subsistent, he has rights which the society cannot abrogate, and under this aspect he is not for the society but the society is for him. Those potentialities then which we might call social, the potentialities towards those perfections which are only to be acquired through life in society, are to be actualized by means of society. In each case the one principle receives a new expression; and in the supernatural society of whose existence we learn from faith another and far greater one, for then it is the potentiality to supernatural life itself which is fulfilled by membership in the Mystical Body of

Christ, while the society in and through its members comes to the fullness of the stature of Christ.[8]

Finally, this same principle is the key to the thomist sociology. There is a temptation, in face of the spiritual chaos into which industrialism has plunged us, to argue that we ought to jettison our material riches, the fruits of the advance of science, and return completely to the simple unmechanical life. It is questionable whether such a step, even if it were possible, would be right. A rightly ordered material or mechanical advancement means the actualization of much of the "somewhat of possibility" in the nature of man; to disown the possibility of achieving it would be to disown reason, to turn our faces in the direction not of fulfilment but of decay. What is wrong, as has been so often pointed out, is that our material advance has in fact been wrongly directed, has not been accompanied by a parallel actualization of the spiritual; so that our social structure is the wrong sort of structure, our machinery largely the wrong sort of machinery, our jobs often the wrong sort of jobs; what is necessary is that we catch up, for the spiritual ought to be governing the material, not lagging behind it.[9]

It is the emergence of these various forms of a single principle, supplying from a single source a key to such diverse problems and so uniting the boundless manifold of experience into a coherent whole, that the speculative value of thomism principally consists. As to its practical value in ordering the world of affairs, two facts may perhaps emerge from a consideration of its programme (to speak only of its extrinsic claims to a hearing): first, that it is not a dead medieval system, suitable perhaps for the days of Pope and Emperor, but not for the twentieth century; secondly, that at least it does offer a way to order, and the tranquillity of order is the definition of peace. If we understood better the aristotelean and thomist principle, so the thomist will argue, if we acknowledged the hierarchy

[8] Cf. *infra*, Ch. VIII. [9] Cf. *infra*, Ch. IX.

which it implies, the primacy of the spiritual, if we grasped more fully its view of the nature and end and right activity of man and the claims of God, perhaps we should come to love contemplation better, and see the world more clearly, and so make our activity contemplation's overflow and servant, and help more effectively to cure the chaos and strife and disruption which are ruining the world.

CHAPTER 3

The Problem of Freedom

IT WAS said of the ill-starred Baron Thunder-ten-Tronck that he was the most puissant seigneur in Westphalia because his country seat could boast a door and some windows. This pre-eminence over his neighbours, implying as it does a corresponding responsibility, provides an excellent text upon which to hang ethical discussion; it is inasmuch as men are not doorless and windowless nomads that any ethic of responsibility has meaning. The rational being has the faculty, so at least the majority of philosophers have held, of securing information from without and of initiating movements from within; of knowing and of acting. The Baron, one imagines, would emerge from his mansion not at random but of set purpose; action, to be properly speaking human, must be purposeful and directed. Not only however must each action have its purpose; the whole succession of actions which make up a man's life must be unified by some common aim if his life is to have coherent meaning. Activity, and the motives which produce activity, must be synthetized. It is the thomist belief that no order and happiness can be achieved until economics and politics are synthetized under ethical principles; but before that is possible there must clearly be an adequate ethic, an ethic

which displays, not one aspect of the truth only, or several, but the truth in its entirety.

St Thomas's genius was pre-eminently for synthesis, and it is often said that that genius is nowhere so apparent as in his ethical teaching. The thomist becomes, as he studies other great ethical systems, more and more amazed at the way in which the propositions he feels to be true in them are incorporated organically in the thomist synthesis, so as not merely to throw light on other aspects of the truth but to become themselves more convincing and more full of meaning. The *Merchant of Venice* is greater than all the stories which Shakespeare used to make it, not least because of the synthetic power with which he interwove them. One is tempted to say the same of the thomist ethic. Evelyn Underhill wrote of religions: "We must not claim the discovery of the Reality as the monopoly of any one system of religion. But we can and ought to claim that no system shall be held satisfactory which does not find a place for it"; similarly an ethic which, however true as far as it goes, does not offer a solution to every aspect of the ethical problem cannot be wholly satisfactory. Integrity is the hall-mark of truth; "he leads the just and holy life" said Augustine, "*qui rerum integer aestimator est,* who judges all things with integrity, with wholeness".

The following pages attempt on the one hand an inquiry into a number of ethical systems with a view to discovering in them both a necessary element of truth and an essential defect, and on the other hand an examination of the thomist theory in the light of that inquiry.

One of the simplest answers to the ethical problem is of course the theory of determinism, since it denies the problem. There can be no question of duty or accountability if one's every action is extrinsically determined. And at first sight the doctrine is comfortable. But the denial of the problem includes the denial of freedom, and this is surely less acceptable; the greatest sacrifice a man can make is that of his own free will, as Aeneas Sylvius knew when,

visiting the Benedictine monastery, he cried: "Ah, how happy are those who live in so beautiful a place—but how much happier those who having seen can go away again!" Yet is free will really a delusion and no more, a bubble which the determinist has effectively pricked?

Determinism assumes, in the history of ethical theory, a variety of forms. There is mechanical determinism, which holds that all our actions are the result of merely mechanical forces. There is physiological determinism, which regards them in terms of reflex action. There is psychological determinism, which holds that action is the result of the will's obedience to the strongest motive, or in other words of its pursuit of the greatest good. There is theological determinism, which holds that God imposes upon the will the course it shall pursue, and that each soul therefore is inescapably predestined to heaven or to hell. Again, the good at which man is, according to these theories, determined to aim—and it must be a good of some sort, for, as Aristotle remarked, "those who object that that at which all things aim is not necessarily good are, we may surmise, talking nonsense"—this good has been very differently described. For some thinkers it is pleasure; Eudoxus was of this opinion, who thought (as Aristotle, attacking him, says) that, "pleasure was the good because he saw all things, both rational and irrational, aiming at it". But between two pleasures, that one will draw the will, on this theory, which is the greater, the more intense, for no qualitative factor can be admitted, else it is at once admitted also that pleasure is not the good but only one of many goods. J. S. Mill, who after his "conversion" of 1826 leaned more and more away from the utilitarianism of Bentham and his father and towards the idealism of Coleridge, recognized qualitative differences in pleasures and so ennobled the ethics of hedonism, though at the expense of its fundamental hypothesis. The illogicality of his position he tried to remedy by arguing that other motives were due to habit, and that altruism was in fact

egoism, for since the happiness of each is the good of each, the happiness of all is the good of all—a fallacy (from distributive to collective term) which will not bear scrutiny. But at least the principle of altruism emerged. Quite apart, however, from the nature of the good pursued, thomism is at variance with these views in holding that man in striving after it does so freely. That position should be briefly reviewed.

In the first place, the free, in the sense here taken, is not the same as the spontaneous. The growth of a tree is spontaneous; the immobility of a man in a pillory is not. Spontaneity is freedom from external force; it does not imply free will. This latter demands in addition that there shall be no determination even from within; the plant is not in this sense free, for it is determined by its own structure to this line of development and not that; the acorn can become an oak but not an elephant. Has man a freedom of such a kind that he can himself decide whether to do or not do a certain action, and, as between two possible alternatives, decide on this one rather than on that?

Of every irrational creature it may be said that it naturally pursues some given particular good; as the unconscious urge in the acorn is in the direction of oakhood, as the dog instinctively chases after the bone, and cats pursue mice. For what is presented to cognitive consciousness and therefore to volition (or what corresponds analogously to volition) is a good of a certain sort. But man has a larger horizon. He can appreciate this good and that, brandy and Bach and the exhilaration of walking in the teeth of the wind; but what raises him above the level of instinctive and unconscious entities is the faculty of discerning in these things the ratio of their goodness, of isolating in the good thing the goodness of the thing, and thence coming to the awareness of goodness in itself, of what is called the universal good as fulfilling in itself the whole possible content of the idea of good and so answering in itself the quest of all possible desire. The will is thus not drawn

merely to this and to that: at the core of all its volitions is the desire of goodness as such; and therefore fruition, the fulfilment of all desire, cannot be attained completely except in the attainment of that universal object.

Now as every nature has, in the thomist view, a determined end to which it is determinately borne, and as the will itself can be considered like anything else as a nature, so the will has its proper end to which it is determinately borne: precisely that universal good in which lies the fulfilment of desire. The dog faced with the bone cannot resist its appeal; the will of man faced with the universal good is equally irresistibly drawn. But on the other hand as one isolated chemical, let us say, from among those which make up the bone will not necessarily attract the dog, so one isolated, particular good will not necessarily draw the will. The good as such determines the will *ut natura*, as a nature, the particular good leaves freedom of choice to the will *ut ratio*, as rational. I may say speculatively that Guinness is good; I may even say speculatively that Guinness is good for me; but I shall not drink the Guinness unless I go on to make a further practical decision. St Thomas's analysis of a deliberate human act is subtle and profound. He distinguishes in the one act whereby I see, isolate, choose and attain a good, twelve moments, from the first apprehension of it as a good to the final fruition which supervenes upon successful activity in its pursuit.

Man as cognitive is concerned only with the discovery and apprehension of the true, or, where the mind is creative, as in art, with the fashioning of forms; man as conative is concerned only with the attaining of the good. Cognition without volition would never issue in action; volition without cognition is impossible. Thus in the genesis of a human act there is progressive interplay of both faculties. The first moment is the merely speculative apprehension of a good—let us say, at sight of a glass of brandy, the judgement "brandy is good". Immediately follows a simple propensity or *complacentia* in the will; and the intellect is led

thereby to judge of the possibility of attaining the good and to assert its goodness here and now: "it would be a good thing to get down to it". Cognition has passed from the purely speculative to the practical. Volition now centres on the adoption of necessary means to the desired end; the mind is moved by this further step to ponder upon them; the will then accepts the means presented, and instigates a further consideration which results in the judgement that this particular policy rather than that one is the best suited to the attainment of the end desired: the stretching out of the hand, let us say, the tilting back of the head. On this the will now centres itself; moves the intellect to issue its orders to arm and neck, and makes these orders operative. The members obey; the brandy floats upon the palate and down the throat, the end is attained; the will rejoices in fruition. These steps are of course only the moments, isolated by analysis, of a single, possibly instantaneous act; they serve to explain how apprehension can become effective pursuit, how vague propensity becomes centred upon a single means to a single object. But where in this analysis does free will enter? Suppose the good apprehended to have been the universal good, each step would have followed of necessity. For the universal good being by definition beatitude, that which satisfies all desire, at no point could there have been a refusal to aim at its attainment; since a refusal would imply that there was some other good to be preferred (if only the good of abstention) and hence that the universal good did not in fact correspond to every desire. But with the glass of brandy this is not, we think, the case. Where does the possibility of another choice arise? Clearly in the practical judgement: "this is good for me here and now". The particular good does *not* draw to itself all desire; it is not all-good, but under one aspect good, under another not-good. A glass of water offers itself as an alternative; speculatively I do not hesitate to judge that brandy is better than water, but practically it is not so simple. If I take the brandy perhaps

I shall rue it in the morning; or perhaps there is the anger of a wife to be thought of; a hundred factors may intervene to present the brandy in an evil light. If then only an object which is wholly desirable is necessarily pursued; if, on the other hand, any object other than the universal good must appear, practically, as both desirable and undesirable, then its pursuit is not necessary but free. Mere apprehension of it as attainable will not do the trick. The practical judgement " this is the good for me " must be imposed somehow upon the judging faculty, and by what other than the will? Thomism will concede to the psychological determinist that the will is determined to one object by the greatest good of the alternatives presented here and now; but it contends that the judgement " this *is* the greatest good here and now " is made (unlike all speculative judgements) under the influence of the will. Here we are met by Buridan's donkey, who died of starvation between two pecks of oats, being unable to make up his mind which to eat; and Leibnitz objected that if in fact the will was not determined to act by the greatest good presented to it, it would be impossible to act at all, for there would be no sufficient reason for choice. To which argument it is replied that if there is no objective reason (supposing the two objects to be equally desirable) there is nevertheless a subjective reason—in the case of the donkey, the advisability of choosing one or other rather than dying between the two. But the theological determinist also has a card to play. True, he may concede, the object itself does not force the will, but its choice is none the less determined, for man can act at all only because God, from whom is both being and consequent activity, moves it to act; this is the teaching of thomism itself. But for St Thomas, God moves things in accordance with the nature he has given them, and it is inconceivable that he should do otherwise; it is inconceivable that the author of nature should be the author of what is unnatural. Man's nature is rational; that is, he can apprehend the nature of goodness, and the par-

ticularity, the imperfection, of particular goods; and to these latter therefore he is not of necessity drawn. Hence it is of his nature to be free with regard to them, and it must be in accordance with that freedom that God moves him. The impulsion is infallible, but it is free; it covers not only the act but the mode of the act; I am infallibly moved to drink, but I am infallibly moved to drink freely. An apparent paradox, a mystery; yet the principle is unassailably clear.

The universal conviction which men have of their freedom is thus supported by metaphysical argument; so too is the further contention, of which Kant made so much, that the conviction we have of responsibility cannot be a delusion, and that it necessarily implies therefore the reality of freedom which is its condition. I cannot be accountable, responsible, if I am not free. But I am accountable. Therefore I am free. "Ought" implies "can"; and the reality of the former implies the reality of the latter.

But if these arguments are valid, is discussion at an end? Does not a little introspection reveal the fact, startling perhaps, that little of what we do is purely rational, deliberately motived and chosen? We act, half our time, from mechanical habit—actions which St Thomas would not allow to be true human acts in the complete sense and called instead *actus hominis*. Sometimes an action we have been doing over and over again, perhaps for years, without thinking about it, suddenly presents itself for the first time to the mind as something to be weighed and judged; we see it then for the first time objectively, and begin to ask ourselves whether it is right and good. We act from irrational prejudice, as a man may unconsciously acquire a tribalist outlook in religion, and imagine the adherents of all other religions to be in league with the devil. We act from passion, as when Candide, *transporté*, "carved the name of Cunégonde on the trees". It has been said of the lover that he is "determinist and behaviourist"; everything he does is motived by love, because he has fallen

in love with Clarissa; but did he choose to fall in love with Clarissa? Obviously not; Clarissa advances in all the pride of her sex-appeal and *incessu patuit dea*; the fort is stormed; the garrison, bewildered, bemused, surrenders; and all this takes place outside the kingdom of wills. The besieged can flee, of course, while there is yet time, but that is not part of the game itself, and in the game the victim is firmly tied in an extravolitional sphere, as firmly as the bear waiting to be baited by the hounds. Again, how many crimes are fully deliberate in their commission, even when the criminal tendency is not to be regarded as a disease? The germ of thought insinuates itself, perhaps unconsciously, into the mind; secretly grows; becomes a force superior to and as though outside the personality, and the deed follows; at some point the project emerged into the realm of the conscious and the deliberate, but at what point, and was it not then too late, was not the damage done below the conscious level, and is not the imputability —if there is any—to be attached to some event or series of events long antecedent to the history of the crime itself?

We act from pressure. Stone walls do not necessarily make a prison, but on the other hand there is durance in which stone plays no part, there are prisons not made with hands. Rational routine is a necessity, and rationally accepted need not harm the personality, but it is possible, and to-day common, to accept the imposition of a routine which invests practically the whole of life, to become a cog. The fact that so many to-day are cogs in the social machine and are almost contented to be cogs, is one of the worst things that can be said of our civilization. It means that whatever may be thought about free will, in fact it is scarcely operative. Add to the organization which pervades our lives the imposition of such opinions as we can lay claim to by newspapers, censorships, convention—there is not much room for liberty. It is an old gibe that the Whigs succeeded, by a fraudulent promise of political liberty, in robbing the people of their economic independence; to-day

even the inward life of thought is in danger of ceasing to be one's own, of becoming the hypnopaedia of *Brave New World*. And even when our thought is free in the sense of not being dictated to us from without, we have to admit the force of the accumulation of influences which go to shape our general outlook. Heredity, environment, childhood experiences, inhibitions due to this, that and the other cause, all these things colour our judgement and at least help to dictate to us a line of conduct.

Kant attempted to safeguard the autonomy of the will by setting it apart in the realm of the noumenal, leaving the phenomenal world to determinism.[1] But it is precisely in the phenomenal world that all our actions take place; and it is in the confusion of passion, prejudice, pressure and all the other factors which militate against the full freedom of an act that the will functions. Violence, fear, passion, pathological states, these may, as St Thomas taught, at least impede and diminish, perhaps wholly destroy, freedom. Sort out from the day's activities those in which none of these factors plays a part: the will's autonomy will be found to have dwindled to sorry proportions. To put free will then at the basis of one's ethic, as St Thomas does, is still to allow, as he does, no small place for determinism.

On the other hand, given the fact of freedom and the possibility of regulation of action by the agent, the moralist is still only at the beginning of his inquiry. What are the principles of this regulation? When will free action be right, when wrong? Is the criterion to be found in the idea of duty or in the quest for happiness; is the discovery of principles of ethical behaviour a question of reasoning out means to an end or of an intuition of the intrinsic character of rightness in each case? It is these problems which must now be discussed.

[1] Cf. *infra*, pp. 72-3.

CHAPTER 4

The Search for Happiness

"NATURE HAS placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects, are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think; every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will but serve to demonstrate and confirm it. In words a man may pretend to abjure their empire: but in reality he will remain subject to it all the while." Thus Bentham in the *Principles of Morals,* echoing Eudoxus and his disciples; which seems to show that in twenty centuries the discovery of truth has not been much advanced on this painstaking but obtuse globe—*ou plutôt*, as Voltaire put it, *ce globule*. The determinist part of this view of matters, the "chain of causes and effects"—and "the marvellous thing about human affairs is the concatenation of effects and causes" as Jacques Tournebroche said when the imprisonment of Brother Ange led to his learning Latin—this has already been discussed. Free will admitted, there are two great lines of thought to be examined, the teleological, the deontological: respectively, the attempt to deduce moral principles from the idea of some end or good, or on the other hand from the idea of the right.

For teleologists in general the criterion of moral behaviour is the attaining of some end. But there are various types of end which present themselves to human appetition. For the hedonist, the end is pleasure and the absence of pain. At its least satisfactory, the theory envisages only

sensuous pleasure; least satisfactory because, apart from other considerations, it will hardly bear the test of experience. *Tristes exitus voluptatum*, said Boethius: pleasure ends in sadness; there is always a morning after, and sooner or later every excitement palls. Mill's introduction of qualitative differences has already been noticed: he speaks of happiness as the end, but this he defines as "an existence exempt as far as possible from pain and as rich as possible in enjoyment, both in quantity and in quality" and explains it further as being not "a life of rapture, but moments of such in an existence made up of few and transitory pains, many and various pleasures, with a predominance of the active over the passive, and having as the foundation of the whole not to expect more from life than it is capable of bestowing". The introduction of qualitative differences means that in fact the criterion is not pleasure but something else, as Mill's example of Socrates and the pig shows. A man would rather be a dissatisfied human being than a satisfied pig, which is the same as saying he would not choose pleasure at all costs, for, as Mr Richard Hughes has remarked, "one cannot wish for a more comfortable seat than an acquiescent pig". Mill goes further. "I never indeed wavered" he says in the *Autobiography*, "in the conviction that happiness is the test of all rules of conduct and the end of life. But I now thought that this end was only to be obtained by not making it the direct end. Those only are happy (I thought) who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness." One is reminded of the King's ambassadors who found Moustique "playing with a young puppy and apparently as happy as the dog. It occurred to them to ask whether he was happy. Moustique was unable to answer, not having reflected on the subject of happiness". "I will add", Mill says elsewhere, "that in this condition of the world, paradoxical as the assertion may be, the conscious ability to do without happiness gives the best prospect of realizing such happiness as is attainable. For nothing

except that consciousness can raise a person above the chances of life by making him feel that, let fate and fortune do their worst, they have not power to subdue him."

St Thomas, exhibiting " what is marvellous about human affairs ", explains the fact that the pursuit of pleasure defeats its own end by analyzing the nature of pleasure. " Every pleasure is a property which follows upon beatitude or any part thereof. For a man has pleasure because he is in possession of some congruous good, in fact or in prospect or at least in retrospect." Pleasure is the accompaniment of congruous activity, as we are told of Ennius, in the prologue to the third book of *Pantagruel* that he " drinking wrote and writing drank "—though this is a poor example, for writing is a congruous activity to some, and drinking to most, and pleasure the accompaniment in each case.

That corporeal pleasure alone could be the object of human activity and its final end is a view of which St Thomas quickly disposes. " For the rational overtops the proportions of corporeal matter, and that part of the soul which is independent of the bodily organs has a kind of infinitude with respect to the body and those parts of the soul concreated with it. . . . Sense-awareness is awareness of a singular determined by matter; but the mind is a force absolved from matter and knows the universal. . . ." You cannot catch whales with a shrimping net. Bodily pleasure is not the end, for it cannot satisfy more than a part of the personality. Pleasure in its widest extent is not the end, for it is only the accompaniment of the *bonum conveniens,* the congruous good, and to seek the property without the substance is to clutch at straws. We go a step higher in the teleological way.

Mill himself had done so in one passage at least. The confusion of terms is great in English writers, for pleasure and happiness are not distinguished as are *delectatio* and *beatitudo* in St Thomas; but when Mill quotes from von Humboldt: " The end of man is . . . the highest and most

harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole", he seems definitely to leave the realm of hedonism for what since the days of Plato and Aristotle has been called eudemonism.

The theory takes its name from the word *eudæmonia*, which Socrates, Plato and Aristotle thought to be undeniably the end of man. If we translate this term "happiness" we are liable to think of it as the sum of pleasures, "an existence exempt as far as possible from pain and as rich as possible in enjoyment"; but this is not what the Greek thinkers meant. They went on indeed to question whether happiness in this sense were not one of the elements in *eudæmonia*, but the term itself means something quite different. It denotes the perfected proper activity of a nature, its full actualization. Sidgwick, after remarking that to avoid serious confusion it is better to translate the word "well-being" or "welfare", thus summarizes the thought of Aristotle: "We observe that men are classified and named according to their functions; all kinds of man, and indeed all organs of man, have their special functions, and are judged as functionaries and organs to be in good or bad condition according as they perform their functions well or ill. May we not then infer that man, as man, has his proper function, and that the well-being or 'doing well'[1] that all men seek, really lies in fulfilling well the proper function of man—that is, in living well, through the normal term of man's existence, that life of the rational soul which we recognize as man's distinctive attribute?"[2]

The whole basis of teleological ethics, the idea of moral action as the striving after an end to be attained rather than the achievement of conformity to a rule of right, is in

[1] As the same writer remarks, "Plato and Aristotle—no less than Socrates—conceive 'well-doing' to be the primary constituent of 'well-being'". *History of Ethics*, p. 48, n.1.

[2] *op cit.* p. 56. Sidgwick goes on to note of course that Aristotle did not limit the human good to this "exercise of man's 'divinest part'".

this notion of well-being. Aristotle's discussion of the question begins, as is usual with him, in the everyday use of words. "Every art and every inquiry," he says at the beginning of the *Nichomachean Ethics,* "and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim." The good is that which is desirable, that which fulfils desire. It is therefore that after which all things strive; and this in turn is "surely that for whose sake every thing else is done. In medicine this is health, in strategy victory, in architecture a house, in any other sphere something else, and in every action and pursuit the end; for it is for the sake of this that men do whatever else they do." The right action, then, will be the good action, that is, the action which is conducive to the attainment of the end. And that end includes many elements, the fulfilment of many potentialities, so that we must not, if we are to be sound teleologists, exclude any one perfection. The criterion of the right is the good, and the good is the perfection of the whole man.

This view St Thomas in substance accepted and incorporated into his own ethical theory; yet as it stands it is open to objection, and may be understood in a sense which makes it wholly untenable. In the first place, it may be argued that it, as much as hedonism, is fundamentally egoist, and cannot do justice to our conviction that altruism is an essential part of the good life. And of course if the theory is to be understood in terms of a striving after one's own good which admits of no recognition of the rights of others and of one's duties towards them, its failure must be evident. Such a quest, if indeed it were a quest for well-being, would obviously defeat its own end, for it can hardly be said that the selfish man is the perfect man. Such is the answer which eudemonism is entitled to give to the objection; for altruism must be included among those aims the sum of which is precisely that well-being which has well-doing as principal part. I cannot achieve my

own perfection unless I perfect the "somewhat of possibility" in me as social animal. But this answer is again open to objection. It exonerates eudemonism, it may be said, from the charge of objective egoism; but it leaves it open to the charge of a subjective egoist bias. You may not be exclusively engaged in fact with your own, as opposed to others', good; but your viewpoint, even at your most altruistic, will be self-centred, for you view altruism itself in terms of your own perfection. And this argument is less easy to meet.

It is of equal cogency against a more exalted form of eudemonism, more exalted at least in appearance, since it brings God into the picture. St Thomas as theologian translated Aristotle's notion of the perfection of the divinest part of man to the supernatural plane, as the Church had always equivalently done; the contemplation of speculative truth became the vision of God. His own thought on this must be returned to later; for the moment a recurrent misunderstanding of the doctrine must be dealt with. The whole subject was profoundly discussed in Bishop Kirk's *The Vision of God*. "Whatever is meant by this ubiquitous phrase of 'seeing,' of 'knowing' God, it certainly refers to some kind of inward or subjective experience. We have seen already how in much pagan thought such a subjective experience—as, for example, ecstasy—was taken as constituting the *whole* of human endeavour; we shall see the same idea obtruding itself from time to time with disastrous results in the history of the Church. Such an attitude Bremond aptly called 'panhedonist,' and no reflection is needed to convince us of the dangers which follow in its train. Once again a man's thoughts and ideals converge upon himself. . . . St Paul set his face rigidly against any such perversion of the truth as this. He insists that experience in itself is of less importance than two other things: the love by which it is conditioned on the human side; and God's loving care for man, which alone makes it possible, on the other. . . . The most explicit passage of all

marshals the two thoughts for a direct attack upon the Corinthian pride in 'gnosis': 'We know that we have "gnosis." "Gnosis" puffeth up, but *love* edifieth'."[3] There is, after all, not so much difference between this seeking for the vision of God, which is really only seeking of self, and the most pedestrian form of mundane hedonism.

Can the situation be saved by arguing that the vision of God is in fact only to be attained by way of virtue, and that virtue necessarily implies the opposite of self-seeking? Hardly; for the pursuit of virtue itself may be a form of self-seeking, an indulgence in the *délices d'une bonne œuvre*, even virtue of the most self-denying kind. Do we not indeed touch here upon one of the most subtle dangers which threaten the life of the spirit? St Thomas holds that the growth of the spirit in the love of God is in one sense like the growth of the body, which passes from infancy through childhood to manhood; and he therefore distinguishes in it three stages: that of the *incipientes*, the beginners whose principal concern is with the eradication of vice; that of the *proficientes*, those who are progressing, and whose concern is mainly with the growth of the virtues, the strengthening of charity; that of the *perfecti*, those who have reached spiritual manhood, who desire "to be dissolved and be with Christ" and who, though they continue to progress in the virtues, do not make this progress their principal care, but in complete disinterestedness strive simply *ut Deo inhaereant*, to cleave to God.[4] And as the essence of charity is self-forgetfulness, self-giving, so even in the lower stages of the spirit's journey it is this last stage which must be held in mind and aimed at; lest on the pretext of serving God we really do no more than satisfy a spiritual craving for "results", counterpart to the lust for efficiency in material things which is ruining our world. There is a policy of Get Rich Quick in the spiritual as well as in the worldly sphere; and it is ultimately anti-christian. St Dominic prayed to be a stone blocking the mouth of hell. . . . We are bound to

[3] Kirk, *op. cit.* p. 49. [4] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. xxiv, 9.

concern ourselves with the eradication of evil and the growth of goodness, but we must not turn the path of virtue into a process of self-aggrandizement. If we do, religion will cease to be what by definition it must be, theocentric, and become egocentric. Recollection will become introspection; mysticism will give place to ceaseless anxiety as to what precise stage of sanctity the soul has reached;[5] the wholly disinterested adoration and worship of the Transcendent will become mere self-indulgence, and the positive striving after closer union with God will be lost in the negative pre-occupation with avoidance of breaches of a code. "In whatever form the idea of service be articulated —whether in praise or prayer or preaching or devotion to the temporal needs of others—it cannot be achieved by a soul whose immediate attention is absorbed by the warfare against itself. Its aim is positive and not negative, constructive rather than destructive, self-forgetful rather than self-centred; and to such an aim the soul which is absorbed in self-culture can never hope to attain."[6] Self-culture: it is the same objection as before; and it should certainly put us on our guard against a possible perversion of piety.[7]

[5] Bossuet wrote to one of his penitents: "Set apart a certain amount of time morning and evening, whether the mind be filled with God or not, doing so with no other object than the adoration which is the duty of his creature. Adore Him with all the capacity you have, yet without anxiety as to the degree of your success or your love, as to whether you are concentrated on God or on yourself, whether your time is profitable or wasted. . . . There is no question here of stages of prayer. We are concerned only with adoring God without any motive save that we are in duty bound to do so, without any desire save to offer adoration, or if we fail in this to accept failure with patience and humility. . . . The value of our prayer depends on the degree to which we die to self in offering it. There is no place for calculations or precautions. Strive to adore, and let that suffice." Quoted by E. Underhill: *Worship*, p. 165.

[6] Kirk, *op. cit.* p. 122.

[7] It may be well to emphasize that the discussion, here or elsewhere, of the difficulties which beset the christian of to-day imply imperfection, not in christianity, but in us christians. The Church of Christ is divine, is the continuance of the Christ-life on earth: and possesses therefore the perfection and the indefectibility of

The various expressions of this attitude of mind, so very different from the quiet and trusting "expression of desires" which is a necessary part of the life of prayer and which has been given divine sanction in the asking of daily bread, are readily recognizable: the absorption in quantity at the expense of quality, the frenzied quest for efficiency, the notion of heaven as merely, in Mr Julian Green's phrase, the "World of Compensations", the emergence of scrupulosity, a phenomenon of the late Middle Ages;[8] and these may well mean the triumph of egocentricity and the death of the soul. "Concentration on the Ethos" as Miss Evelyn Underhill puts it, "takes the place

[8] Cf. *Thérapeutique spirituelle du scrupue* (*Vie Spirituelle*, March, 1935), in which the writer ascribes the rise of this malady to the "juridical treatment introduced by theologians, in the direction of the moral life" in the sixteenth century.

Christ. But in another sense the Church is a human society, made up of individual human beings; and, as we know only too well, and as history shows only too clearly, while so many achieve so great a holiness, the majority of us are far indeed from the wisdom and sanctity of Christ; for we fail, precisely, to put into effect the truths and principles of christianity; we impede, instead of co-operating with, the divine energizing of the Christ-life. It is part of our duty then, as christians, to be clear as to where our difficulties lie; to discuss these is part of the business of the theologian or philosopher; but it is also in degree the business of us all. The expression of a point of view with regard to these things, therefore, is very far from being a criticism of the divine life of the Church, the fuller living of whose life it is the whole object of such discussion to make possible for us. As Fr Stratmann has said: "Anyone who is acquainted with the spirit of both catholic and non-catholic cultivated and ignorant thought, knows how depressing it is when everything to do with the Church is apologized for and justified. We know what a relief it is when shadows are acknowledged to be shadows, stains to be stains, puzzles to be puzzles. How much better it is to acknowledge and bewail that the catholics in practical daily life, lay people, priests, bishops, popes, have, to a great extent, forgotten that the Church is the bearer of the Spirit and the Office of Christ, the Mother of all mankind, the Mystical Body of Christ, and that in the course of the world's history her members have fallen short and still fall short of her high calling. If this is acknowledged the catholic ideal stands much higher and is much purer." (*The Church and War*, p. 130).

which rightly belongs to adoration of the *Logos*; and man, intent upon the moral struggle, forgets the supernatural purpose which the moral struggle is meant to serve, and with it, that patient and genial tolerance of our many levelled human nature, which is a faint reflection of the compassionate love of God. This is the vice of puritanism and of all perfectionist types of piety. The objective worship of traditional christianity, with its constant remembrance of the eternal perfection of God, here provides a valuable corrective: reminding us that self-fulfilment—even in the moral sphere—is at best only a preparation for that self-loss which is the consummation of all worship."[9] "If my aim in life is to attain a specified standard, or to live according to a defined code, I am bound continually to be considering myself, and measuring the distance between my actual attainment and the ideal. It is impossible by such a road to attain the self-forgetfulness which we believe to be the essence of sanctity."[10] It is a question of degree, of the danger of over-emphasis. These things have all, in degree, their proper place; and in an age in which spiritual vitality was high, in which there was no danger of the letter killing the spirit, there would be little cause for apprehension. But we are living to-day in a world in which spiritual vitality is lacking and which, where it has not become wholly renegade to christianity, has attenuated the living principles of christianity until they are often no more than conventionalized and externalized maxims; human life in general becomes more and more a question, on the one hand of external regimentation whether it be due to dictatorship or to bureaucracy, and on the other, of the triumph of quantity and efficiency and activism over quality and ultimate values and contemplation; and all this has had, and must have, its effect upon the lives of christians unless they are on their guard against it. Political and economic encroachments upon personality are more readily recognizable; the effect of a surrounding atmosphere upon the life of the

[9] *Worship*, p. 81. [10] Kirk, *op. cit.* p. 64.

spirit is more insidious, and calls for a more constant vigilance.

Whether then we are speaking of hedonism or of eudemonism or of panhedonism, the same objection stands. Altruism, service, may enter the objective programme; but the attitude of mind is egocentric, and so, poisoned at the core. Tawney wrote very truly: "Those who seek God in isolation from their fellow-men . . . are apt to find not God but a devil, whose countenance bears an embarrassing resemblance to their own"; and the worst kind of isolation is isolation of mind.

Against all the hedonist theories another objection is to be raised. Mill's altruism is a great ideal; and surely, it might be urged, we could have no higher criterion for our actions than this; the Gospels themselves give superlative praise to him who lays down his life for his friend. Is not altruism precisely the philosophical counterpart of the christian doctrine of brotherly love? No, it is not necessarily so. If adopted as a sufficient theory—rather, if adopted in practice away from the larger horizon of a more complete theory—it is all too apt to lead to the inhumanity of the charity organization, of bureaucratic methods of improving working-class living conditions. In one of her novels Radclyffe Hall described a discussion about some new Council houses. "Mrs. Taylor interrupted: 'Is it true what they tells me about an inspector comin' into yer 'ouse and stickin' 'is nose into everythink and turnin' yer out if yer ways don't suit 'im? 'Cause if that's the case I'd rather not move. This 'ere 'ovel aren't much but at least it's me own'. . . . Mr. Bullen shifted his painful leg: 'No one's going to trespass round my place' he shouted. 'Us Bullens dates back to the old Town Gate, afore ever they thought of their damn' Council 'ouses!'" . . . And then Mrs. Roach brought forth her trump card; where did the new houses stand? "'On an old rubbish 'eap outside the town walls, with nothin' to meet yer gaze but the railway'. . . . 'There won't be no view of the Marsh!' cried Crofts Lane. 'No

view of the sea nor the river nor the ships—sharn't be able to see the ships goin' by'. . . ."[11] It is instructive to note how Bentham was hated because of his insistence on centralization; altruism, if once it becomes an inhuman machinery, defeats its own end. This would seem tantamount to saying that altruism is in fact only such when it is inspired and directed by something deeper: it must be a personal sympathy and help, secure from any feeling of superiority because appreciative of the organic nature of society and of the need of help on the part of the helper as well as of the helped. The good Bishop Butler made this clear in his treatment of the principle of benevolence: "If there be in mankind any disposition to friendship: if there be any such thing as compassion, for compassion is momentary love; if there be any such thing as the paternal or filial affections; if there be any affection in human nature, the object and end of which is the good of another; this is itself benevolence, or the love of another"—here, we must surely hold with Sidgwick and against Professor Broad, is emphatically not the idea of the charity organization, but "kind affections for particular individuals". Interpreted in this sense, altruism is saved from one pressing danger, but difficulty is not yet at an end. As Butler himself showed, it must be combined with "reasonable self-love", for both forces are inherent in human nature and will not be denied. "The world" wrote Ashley, "never yet had complete individualism; it will never, I believe, have complete socialism; for the egoistic sentiment is as permanent an element in human nature as the social."[12] And the two principles cannot be united except under a third, higher, principle. Further, in order to know what does in fact make for the greatest good of the greatest number we have need of some criterion; the individual judgement of benefactors has only too often been proved to be at variance with that of

[11] Radclyffe Hall: *The Sixth Beatitude,* pp. 219, 220.

[12] W. J. Ashley: *The Economic Organisation of England,* p. 191.

the benefited. Eudemonism is far superior to hedonism whether egoist or altruist in that it does at any rate rest upon an objective standard; an ethic whose criterion is mere subjective caprice is no system at all, and this is in fact the gravest objection to these theories. Ethics is impossible without absolutes; if there is no absolute right there is no absolute truth, and therefore no absolute validity for the utilitarian tenet itself. We might of course say that the one absolute principle is the pursuit of one's own individual happiness, in whatever that may be thought to consist; but this would immediately fall foul of our ineradicable convictions with regard to the rightness or wrongness of many actions: murder for example would be right to-day, wrong to-morrow; theft would be here a duty, there a crime. If one argued against this that such convictions were in fact no more than illusions, the result of tradition, heredity and so forth, still it would remain true that we should be landed in subjectivism, that social life would be liable to become anarchy, that a science of ethics would be an impossibility, and that truth with goodness would become a meaningless term.

It might be objected to this that the moral law of the absolutist himself proves to be on inspection relative. "Thou shalt not commit murder, thou shalt not steal"; but a man may, according to the theologians, kill in self-defence, may take what belongs to another if he is starving. And if the theologians explain that then it ceases to be murder or theft, are they not driving back the moral principle to the useless tautology, "Killing and theft are wrong when it is wrong to kill and steal"? No; the principle which underlies the prohibition of murder is that no one has the right to take life but the author of life and such others as he may have invested with the necessary (delegated) authority—the State; and on this principle the killing of a man in self-defence does not impinge: the intention of the act, as St Thomas points out, is the defence of one's own life, the taking of the aggressor's is an effect

per accidens; and so it is that it would be murder to kill a man who was merely trying to rob one of one's property. Again, the principle involved in the question of theft is the right of property. A man has the right to hold and dispose of various goods; but it surely requires little thought to convince us that that right is limited, that when one man is dying of starvation another cannot say "My food is my own, and therefore I am not obliged to share it". The right of property gives way before the right to live. These principles are absolute, and the laws which derive from them are therefore absolute also.

Hedonism, eudemonism, panhedonism, then, are open to serious objection. But it does not follow that they are wholly false. Take from hedonism what might be called its exaggeration: that pleasure is the ultimate purpose of human life; leave then the principle that man should aim at pleasure; is this false? "Now to be happy," said Aristotle, "to live blissfully and beautifully, must consist mainly in three things, which seem most desirable; for some say prudence is the greatest good, some virtue, and some pleasure." St Thomas remarks that "Men need pleasure as a medicine against the manifold pains and sorrows of life." and elsewhere quotes the Philosopher: "No one can remain long in sorrow and without pleasure". To live a life of unrelieved self-negation is psychologically impossible. One of two things would happen. Self-deception is very easy, and mortification may be a mere oblique indulgence. *Non di rado, la sofferenza fisica nell' amore attrae più della blandizia,*[13] as D'Annunzio remarked. There is in normal human nature an element which when exaggerated becomes a psycho-sexual malady and is called masochism; and it is when it remains unacknowledged that it is most disastrous. If we think to acquire sanctity by the avoidance of all pleasure and the ceaseless infliction of pain we may be

[13] "Not infrequently, in human passion physical pain is more desired than tenderness."

enjoying a thoroughly terrestrial paradise on the pretext of driving the devil into hell, and indulging in a vice all the more dangerous for being hidden under the cloak of piety.[14]

When this does not occur, in greater or less degree, there is the other alternative, the asylum. And the process in either case exhibits precisely that vice which has been used as an argument against the various forms of hedonism : egocentricity. The personality, denied that centrifugal direction which loving contacts with the world ensure, closes in upon itself; it becomes atrophied; in place of an ever-widening range of appreciation and love and sympathy comes a more and more opaque insensitivity (itself, as St Thomas remarked, a vice); and an unrelieved self-absorption quickly supervenes. Paphnutius, who rescued Thaïs from the world, refused the advice of the simple Palemon— " I am but a poor sinner . . . and I know little about men, having passed all my life in this garden, with gazelles, little hares, and pigeons. But . . . in your place, brother Paphnutius, instead of retiring at once into some awful desert, I should take such amusements as are fitting to a monk and a holy abbot ". No; " the top of the pillar was not large enough to allow the monk to lie at full length, so that he slept with his legs crossed and his head on his breast, and sleep was a more cruel torture to him than his wakeful hours "; and then Paul had his vision, and saw " three demons, who, full of joy, prepared to seize that man . . . Pride, Lust and Doubt ".

" The temperate man " says St Thomas, becoming thor-

[14] It is going against the evidence to assert that the saints' joy in suffering is masochistic: their outlook is precisely too centrifugal; it is self-forgetful, not self-indulgent. Similarly it would clearly be wrong to condemn all mortification, even sought mortification, because there is a danger that it may be in reality a form of self-indulgence, just as it is wrong to condemn the reason because it is possible to make a bad use of it. The fact remains, and wise directors of souls are aware of it, that bodily mortification needs careful advice and supervision.

oughly smug for the sake of argument, "flees pleasures, while boys and beasts, in whom is no virtue, pursue them. Therefore pleasures are in themselves evil and to be avoided." To this he answers with a bluff denial. "The temperate man does *not* flee all pleasures, but only those which are immoderate and not in accordance with reason. And the fact that boys and beasts pursue them does not show them to be universally evil, for there is in these a God-given natural appetite, which moves towards that which is congruous to it.

"Some men have asserted that all pleasures are evil. . . . But this opinion was ill-advised. For no one can live without some sensuous and bodily pleasure; and if those who teach that all pleasures are evil are themselves caught taking their pleasure, men will be all the more prone to pleasure by force of their example, doctrine being forgotten; . . . for in matters of human activity and passion, where experience is of greatest value, example is of more influence than words. . . . There is pleasure which is good, when the appetite, whether higher or lower, rests in what is congruous to reason; there is pleasure which is bad, when the appetite rests in what is disconsonant with reason and with the law of God."[15]

What is unnatural is unlawful. The maker of a nature cannot, if he be at once omnipotent and good, implant in it an essential desire or movement towards that which it would be impossible or unlawful to pursue. And if to try to achieve complete misery is wrong as well as chimerical how much more so to act in such a way as to frustrate one's natural growth? The whole idea of function, purpose, design, nature itself, would be set at naught; life would be a metaphysical monstrosity. It is unreasonable to try to use a piano as a mangle, or to expect a toadstool to become a tree; it is unreasonable to want a man to grow backwards, to become more stupid, ugly, vicious. A potentiality must aim at fulfilling its desire for its proper actualization; and

[15] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. xxxiv, 1.

when the potentiality is consciously apprehended, when the subject is rational and free, the natural necessity which dictates to inanimates and the instinct which urges animals to follow their proper course are supplemented by a faculty which, for being free to choose, is burdened with the moral responsibility of choosing well, of reaching that perfection which God has made its end.

St Thomas makes Aristotle's eudemonism the groundwork of his ethic. As theologian he can go far beyond it. The somewhat chilly ideal of the contemplation of truth as the end of man is transfigured when that truth is known to be the Truth, and the contemplation not abstract but concrete, the closest of all possible unions with a Person who is the object of love. And as Aristotle did not banish other perfections from his idea of beatitude, so St Thomas includes many secondary joys and perfections of the body, mind and heart, so that it is the potentiality of the nature in its entirety which is thus brought to completion. And as it is to this completion that life on earth must be directed, so right action will consist in that which is calculated to bring it about.

" The companionship of friends " is for St Thomas one of heaven's secondary joys. The phrase exhibits altruism in its due place in the eudemonist scheme. " Wonderful must he be " said Aelred of Rievaulx, " who can afford to do without friends and without love. More wonderful assuredly than God Himself." And that altruism in this sense of personal sympathy is a part of the good life cannot be questioned.

We may not, then, deny truth to the " theories of the good " under discussion. On the other hand, there remain in them difficulties which must be put right before a complete ethic can be achieved; some other element must be included if relativism and egocentricity are to be avoided. Will the deontological systems provide it?

CHAPTER 5

The Search for the Right

"THERE IS no such thing" wrote Cudworth, "as an Arbitrarious Essence"; and on this ample principle joined issue with Hobbes in the cause of absolutes. Morality, these early intuitionists maintained, is not an affair of a monarch's capricious decrees; its laws are immutable and eternal, and are written in the rational nature of man. And the motive which leads men to do what is right is not individual desire, but, as More puts it, the apprehension by the "boniform faculty" of the "sweetness and flavour" of good. So far from the right being that which best promotes the individual's happiness or pleasure, it has nothing to do with the idea of an end at all; the reaction against the egoism of Hobbes produced a theory which denied the claims of eudemonism as well, to the safeguarding of absolutism and objectivity. "It was a very wise Observation of Plato," wrote Samuel Clarke, "which he received from Socrates; that if you take a young man, impartial and unprejudiced, one that never had any Learning, nor any Experience in the World, and examine him about the natural relations and proportions of things, or the moral Differences of Good and Evil; you may only by asking him questions without teaching him anything at all directly, cause him to express in his Answers just and adequate Notions of Geometrical Truth, and true and exact determinations concerning Matters of Right and Wrong. From whence he thought that it was to be concluded, that all Knowledge and Learning is nothing but Memory, or only a recollecting upon every new occasion, what had been before known in a state of prae-existence. And some Others, both Antients and Moderns, have concluded that the Ideas of all

first and simple Truths, either natural or moral, are Innate and originally impressed or stampt upon the Mind. In their Inference from Observation, the Authors of Both these Opinions seem to be mistaken. But this much it proves unavoidably: that the differences, relations, and proportions of things both natural and moral, in which all unprejudiced Minds thus naturally agree, are certain, unalterable, and real in the things themselves, and do not at all depend on the variable Opinions, Fancies, or Imaginations of men, prejudiced by Education, Laws, Customs, or evil Practices: And also that the Mind of Man naturally and unavoidably gives its Assent, as to natural and geometrical Truth, so also to the moral differences of things, and to the fitness and reasonableness of the Obligation of the everlasting Law of Righteousness, whenever fairly and plainly proposed."

This theory, that there is an absolute right to which action ought to conform without regard to end or consequences, and which is intuitively apprehended by the mind, received a nasty shock in the nineteenth century when it was discovered that other races had intuitions sadly differing from our own. Clarke, indeed, had noted as a possible objection to his view the " total Ignorance, which some whole Nations are reported to lie under, of the nature and force of these moral obligations "; but this difficulty he was able to dismiss on the ground that " Ignorance and Stupidity are no Argument against the Certainty of anything," since " there are many Nations and Peoples almost totally ignorant of the plainest Mathematical Truths, as, of the proportion, for Example, of a Square to a Triangle of the same Base and Height: And yet these Truths are such, to which the Mind cannot but give its assent necessarily and unavoidably, as soon as they are distinctly proposed to it ". But he had on the other hand admitted that " were there upon Earth a Nation of rational and considerate Persons, whose Notion concerning moral Obligations . . . were universally and directly contrary to what I have

hitherto represented, this would be indeed a weighty Objection". Unfortunately it seemed that perhaps there was.

The difficulty however is not insoluble; it is not sufficient to make the entire intuitionist position untenable, and the theory survived in altered form. It persists. Its main tenet from the objective side, that the notion of the right is not derived from that of the good, stretches back into the philosophy of Greece, and has continued throughout the history of thought to oppose the teleological theory. Stoicism led to a change of emphasis from the idea of end and good as put forward by Plato and Aristotle to the idea of a right, a rule of conduct, in which the purpose of the nature of man, the perfection of "function," actualization of the potential, played little or no part. In the Middle Ages this attitude found expression in the ethics of the voluntarists; Ockham, for example, held that the right is arbitrarily determined by the divine will. Man has the commandments, a code of laws, and he has to obey them. His not to reason why. There is no reason why. Intellectualism is at a complete discount, for the good does not depend upon the true.

It must surely require but little reflection to convince us of the falsity of this conception. It is inconceivable that, having given creatures a definite nature, with in consequence a definite direction, God should demand of them to act contrary to that nature and that direction, as would be the case for example if he were to make lying a duty incumbent upon mankind whose nature is directed towards the discovery of truth. Still less conceivable that, being himself Truth, he should demand of men that they should deny truth.

But even if this legalist theory is understood in a more acceptable sense, excluding arbitrariness but emphasizing the divine will rather than conformity to nature or reason as reflecting the divine mind, it is still open to objection. Historically, christian thinkers have sometimes in fact

tended to emphasize this legalist aspect of the good life, to regard the path of virtue as conformity to a code of laws rather than as a movement towards God and towards perfection in the vision of God.[1] At times, legalism has been accepted as the religion of the masses, while contemplation, the movement towards vision, has been regarded as the preserve of the professional and cloistered contemplative. But the important fact in the present context is that religion will always tend to decay into legalism if the idea of ethics as teleological is obscured. If morals are divorced from dogma, or if dogma is regarded as a set of isolated propositions which it is necessary to accept but which have no directing effect upon human life and provide no standard for action, if the necessity for worship is explained exclusively in terms of a positive precept, then religion becomes emptied of its content: the christian life ceases to be a life, a growth, a process, and becomes instead mere conformity to a code. Insufficient legislation will lead, it is supposed, to licence; but too much emphasis on legislation may lead to legalism. There is no denying that christendom has suffered grievously from the legalist spirit. "And next" wrote Erasmus, attacking the bad monks in the *Praise of Folly*, "come those that commonly call themselves religious and monks; most false in both titles, when both a great part of them are farthest from Religion, and no men swarm thicker in all places than themselves. . . . And of these, a great part build so much on their Ceremonies and petty Traditions of Men, that they think one Heaven is too poor a reward for so great merit; little dreaming that the time will come when Christ, not regarding any of these trifles, will call 'em to account for His precept of Charity. One shall show ye a large Trough full of all kinds of Fish; another tumble ye out so many bushels of Prayers; another reckon ye so many myriads of Fasts, and fetch 'em up agen in one dinner by eating till he cracks agen; another produces more bundles of Ceremonies than seven of the stout-

[1] Cf. *infra*, pp. 104-9.

est Ships would be able to carry; another brags he has not touched a penny these three score years without two pairs of gloves upon his hand; another wears a cowl so lined with grease that the poorest tarpaulin would not stoop to take it up; another will tell ye he has lived these fifty-five years like a spunge, continually fastened to the same place; another is grown hoarse with his daily chanting; another hath contracted a Lethargy by his solitary living; and another the palsie in his Tongue for want of speaking. But Christ, interrupting them in their vanities, which otherwise were endless, will ask 'em, 'Whence this new kind of Jews? I acknowledge one kind of Commandment which is truly mine, and of which I hear nothing. I promist, 'tis true, my Father's heritage, and that without parables, not to Cowls, old Prayers, and Fastings, but to the duties of Faith and Charity. Nor can I acknowledge them that least acknowledge their faults. They that would seem holier than myself, let 'em if they list possess to themselves those hundred sixty-five heavens of Basilides the Heretick's invention, or command them whose foolish Traditions they preferr'd before my Preceps, to erect them a new one.' When they shall hear these things, and see common ordinary persons preferr'd before them, with what countenance, think ye, will they behold one another?"

The pilgrim's inner progress is in danger of being turned into the pilgrim's external programme when the idea of law itself becomes materialized. Law is the perfection of movement; without it, order, and therefore that *consonantia* or harmony which is one of the elements of beauty, are impossible. But it is law regarded precisely in the sense of order flowing from or consonant with the nature of things as the pattern of their proper perfection, not as an arbitrarily imposed coercion foreign to the nature of things. Ethical theory must have its law as much as logic; but law made to spring from within, law as synonymous with truth demanding realization in action. Springing from within: it is this which makes the difference between the living and the

dead. Life, in the great aristotelean definition, is movement *ab intrinseco*, from within; when law is the expression of the structure of a thing, the pattern of its growth to perfection and fulfilment, as is the case for example with biological laws, then it is life-giving; when it is viewed as mere external regulation, either because it is in fact arbitrary and therefore possibly contranatural, or because emphasis is laid on the imposition and not on the conformity to inner growth, then it tends to be suffocating and to lead to decay and death.

It should be emphasized that what is for the moment in question is the attitude of mind from which law is regarded rather than the essence of law itself. We shall have occasion later to notice the difference, stressed by St Thomas, between the old law and the new; for him, the moral law in general is precisely an extrinsic guiding principle of human action; and it is only in the new law of grace, which gives not only direction but the power to fulfil, that this is not verified. Here, however, we are concerned with a different distinction. It is possible to regard any natural law, whether physical or moral, or any just positive law, in one of two ways: either as a prescribed programme to be imposed on those subject to it, or as the congruous expression of their natural tendencies. So we may regard the physical laws which govern the growth of a plant or the flight of a bird, the moral law which is natural to man because in harmony with the exigencies of his rational nature and conducive to his perfection, the positive law of God, the just positive laws of men since these in their turn conduce to human perfection, in either of these two ways; and in the ethical context everything turns on which point of view we adopt. The society in which social laws (supposing them to be just and conducive to the general good) are regarded as externally imposed upon unwilling citizens will be an unhappy society; that in which the laws are assimilated, regarded as a fitting expression of the life of the community, will be a happy society.

In the same way, if we regard the moral law as a whole exclusively in terms of external imposition attended by sanctions, we shall be in danger of losing our freedom and consequently our morality; if we assimilate it, so as to make it the expression of our tendency towards perfection, we shall be free and moral beings. True, religion regards the moral law essentially as external in so far as it views moral action in terms of obedience to God, but here it is precisely the work of love to assimilate the external and so make it internal, for the external is the will of a personal God, not of an impersonal Absolute, and the will of the creature can identify itself with it in so far as the motive force which prompts the obedience is love and not servile fear. It is in this growth from fear to love, and therefore to the gradual assimilation of law, that progress in the life of the spirit consists. The law of the slave and of the son may be objectively the same; what differentiates them is that for the slave the law is simply imposed, the son accepts it and makes it his own.

The same distinction is valid if we are dealing with the revealed law of Christ. A legalist attitude of mind may result, objectively, in a complete reversal of the spirit of the Gospel. Even in the new law, which essentially consists in " the grace of the holy Spirit which is given to those who are faithful to Christ ", St Thomas remarks that there must also be a written law concerning those secondary things which dispose the soul for the grace of the Spirit and for its use, for the christian must be instructed in these as regards both what is to be believed and what is to be done.[2] But again the legalist outlook will concentrate on the external as external; and this very concentration will result in a presentation of the christian law which is fundamentally alien to the spirit of Christ.

It is again a question of emphasis, of attitude of mind. Not what one does so much as how one does it, is what differentiates christian reverence for the law from phari-

[2] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. cvi. 1.

saic legalism. Law is a necessity, in morals as in physics; the first essential of the good life is love of, and vital energy for, the good; but we need to know with certainty and security the direction that that vital energy ought to take, the manner in which love ought to express itself. Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it: christianity is certainly not antinomian. Yet on the other hand our Lord's severest censures were reserved for the Pharisees, whose characteristic was their scrupulous observance of the minutest observance of the law; and this not merely because they had elaborated it into a burden impossible to be borne, but, deeper than that, because their attitude of mind had poisoned their observance. Their religion had become completely externalized; their ideal consisted solely in achieving material exactitude; and the result is expressed in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. Hence our Lord's insistence upon inner purity of spirit; and St Paul's constant antithesis between the spirit and the letter.

We should not be too ready to dismiss as mere antinomianism the criticisms directed to-day against traditional christian morality. There is very often, behind such criticism, the conviction that that morality, as taught by the churches, is a legalist worship of the letter, and alien to the spirit of Christ who said of his yoke that it was sweet and light, and to the spirit of St Paul who spoke of the freedom of the sons of God. "We are inclined" writes Mr Lesslie Newbigin, "to dismiss too easily the criticisms which are being levelled against traditional christian morality. We shall correct this danger if we take our bearings by the New Testament. . . . If we do so we shall find—I believe—that we must listen to them with the utmost seriousness, not merely because they are so powerfully supported and so widely accepted, but for the more important reason that they are in many respects nearer to the New Testament than a great deal of our christian teaching on the subject. They are in certain respects nearer to Jesus and farther

from the Pharisees than we are. They are nearer to Paul, who was accused of setting law at naught, and farther from those who so accused him than we are. After all, freedom has been one of the great words of the christian Church in the high moments of its life, and it has meant something. . . . I suggest that if we were more truly in line with the New Testament on this point we should be hearing . . . less from those who accuse us of binding upon men burdens too heavy to be borne. Our real peril is the reverse of antinomianism; it is pharisaism. We shall do well to listen to our critics."[3] We shall certainly do well to listen to this statement of the case; for it is only in so far as we have this understanding of the spirit of the Gospel that we can hope to fulfil our duty towards the world. "We mustn't go out into the world as if the world were our enemy and we had to conquer it. It is like the poor wounded man on the road to Jericho; it is hungry, and we want to give it something to eat; thirsty, and we want to give it something to drink; homeless, and we want to open the door and give it a lodging and a home. It is not an enemy we want to overcome and subdue. We have some glorious thing, some Light, we want those outside to share; like the sunshine. We want it to be theirs as much as ours."[4]

The moral law remains the pattern of what we ought to be; its formulation by divine authority is necessary for us, as the revelation of truths concerning God which are discoverable by the human mind is necessary for us, since, as St Thomas remarks in this latter context, so many men would otherwise be impeded from attaining the truth, whether by a natural indisposition of temperament for the necessary mental activity, or by the pressure of everyday affairs, or by laziness. And not only in this sense of supplying information, direction; but also as providing a

[3] J. E. Lesslie Newbigin: *Christian Freedom in the Modern World*, pp. 12, 13.

[4] V. McNabb, O.P.: *God's Way of Mercy*, p. 113.

secondary motive for action, supported by sanction, the law is necessary for us in the stages of spiritual growth prior to the reign within us of charity; the law here guides and restrains as the child is guided and restrained by its parents; and few of us succeed altogether in passing beyond this pupillary state. But sanctity has at least to be aimed at; and sanctity means precisely the substitution, for this external restraint, of the internal impulsion of charity; for the law then becomes assimilated by the personality, the expression of it since it is the expression of love. It is to the spiritual man, as Maritain has remarked, that one can say *ama et fac quod vis:* " if you love you may do what you will, for you will never hurt love ".[5] And until that state is reached, the important thing is to distinguish law from legalism, that is, to recognize the danger of emphasizing law, in the sense of external regulation, over love, and so of forgetting that obedience in that sense ought finally to give way to the vital obedience which is coincident with the intrinsically determined expression of love.

For St Thomas, morality is first of all the *motus rationalis creaturae in Deum*—the movement of the rational creature towards God. Not man alone, but every creature, has God as its end; it is towards him, as the *Summum Bonum,* that all desire and activity tends, towards assimilation with him in the imitation of his perfection, which is the compassing of its own—" the end of everything is its perfection ". The tendency towards God in the goodness he bestows is in every creature; the movement of the universe is a movement *in Deum*; and man shares with the rest of creation in this Godward movement. There is, in the thomist view, no such thing as morality in the ordinary legalist sense. Whereas irrational creatures tend unconsciously or instinctively towards their end, man does so consciously and freely; what is in their case a question of physical necessity becomes in his a question principally of

[5] *Art et Scolastique,* p. 123.

the moral order, the " disposition of things according to the judgement and determination of man ".[6] Obedience to an external codification of laws, regarded exclusively as such, can thus be at best only a very secondary element in the good life. And this is verified in the context of the christian law, to be discussed more fully later; for here it is precisely the function of grace (and grace is that " in which the whole virtue of the new law consists ") to render man's obedience to law intrinsic, assimilated, in the inner dynamism of charity, " not only indicating what is to be done, but helping also to its fulfilment ".[7] The forbidding of sins, the imposition of sanctions, will not suffice for the perfection of the divine law; it must make a man wholly fit to share in everlasting happiness, and this can only be done by the grace of the holy Spirit, whereby that charity which fulfils the law is ' diffused in our hearts ' . . . This grace the old law could not confer; it was reserved to Christ to do this. For ' the law was given by Moses, but grace and verity was made by Jesus Christ '. And so the old law is good indeed, but imperfect, as is said in the epistle to the Hebrews: ' The law brought nothing to perfection '."[8]

Legalism, then, on the objective side precludes all possibility of morality being expressible in hedonist, utilitarian, eudemonist terms; on the side of the subject it refuses to regard the search for happiness as an acceptable motive, and in general substitutes for the idea of choosing the right means to an end that of duty for duty's sake. This point of view was strongly urged by Kant in his *Metaphysic of Morals*. Butler, in his discussion of the psychology of morality, had distinguished three principles regulative of action: self-love, benevolence, and conscience; and it was from the recognition, in his *Dissertation on Virtue*, of the fact that the dictates of conscience may not coincide with conclusions as to what is conducive to the general happi-

[6] P. A. Horvàth, O.P.: *De Moralitate*, p. 3.

[7] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. cvi, 1, ad 2. [8] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. xcviii, 1.

ness that the battle between intuitionists and utilitarians took its rise. But do self-love and conscience coincide? Self-love in Butler's sense is not hedonist self-seeking; he calls it reasonable self-love and means by it the " cool and reflective aiming at one's own happiness ". But what does he mean by happiness? There is the usual terminological difficulty; Butler does not, like Hutcheson, explicitly include perfection in his definition, but he does distinguish happiness from pleasure, and talks of the " course of life " our " real nature points out ", a definitely eudemonist conception which is strengthened by his definition of virtue as what is according to nature, and his account of nature itself in which the notion of end and completion is urged in the analogy of the watch, for as this is fitted by the relations of its parts to measure time, so human nature is fitted to achieve virtue, and " thus far the cases are perfectly parallel ", there being only this difference that " a machine is inanimate and passive; but we are agents ". So it is that in his ethical discussion of the relative authority of conscience and reasonable self-love (or, in other words, of duty and interest) Butler can say that the two coincide " for the most part in this world, but entirely . . . if we take in the future "; and it is this recognition of the coincidence of teleology and deontology which brings him so close to the thomist view.

For Kant such a synthesis was out of the question. Teleology for his age meant utilitarianism; it was this he was attacking; and he came therefore to hold that, so far from interest being a principle correlative with conscience, there could be no right motive at all other than disinterested love of duty, and that action is not completely moral unless done exclusively for duty's sake. Reason was not given us, so he holds, to achieve happiness, for this office is far better performed by instinct; action done from inclination is therefore morally of no value, is indeed determined, for Kant draws a sharp distinction (in order to prove the existence of freedom and duty) between the autonomous and the hetero-

nomous, the noumenal and the phenomenal, man. As members of the phenomenal world the laws of action lie outside us in events and circumstances; in this there can be no question of freedom and morality. But as members of the noumenal world we are possessors of autonomous will, creating our own moral law. This separation leads Kant into a position which falsifies the facts of inner conflict: it is precisely because we are at one and the same time members of both worlds that duty and interest do conflict. But apart from this, it leads him to a complete rejection of the teleological idea. All pursuit of an end is relegated to the non-moral phenomenal world. The eudemonist idea, the "ontological conception of perfection", is "empty and indefinite"; it follows of course from the *Critique* that, the noumenon being unknowable, there can be no question of discovering what the end of man may be; any such discovery could only be derived from experience, and therefore could never be universal and necessary. Even supposing, then, that happiness (whatever that may be thought to consist in) ought to be aimed at, still it must be aimed at not because it is an object of desire but simply for duty's sake, from the motive of respect for the law. The objections to such a position are obvious. "It is not possible" wrote Aristotle in the *Magna Moralia*, "to perform virtuous actions without pain or pleasure. The middle state does not exist." And for him, pleasure in virtuous action was a sign that a man was truly virtuous; the virtuous life "has no need of pleasure as a sort of adventitious charm, but has its pleasure in itself"; "the man who does not rejoice in noble actions is not even good; since no one would call a man just who did not enjoy acting justly, nor any man liberal who did not enjoy liberal actions; and similarly in all other cases. If this is so, virtuous actions must be in themselves pleasant". For Kant, on the other hand, a man must be considered to grow in virtue in so far as he excludes pleasure from virtuous action. In other words, the whole idea of virtues as *habitus* of the soul is rejected. Education

is not a question merely of accumulating a great deal of factual information; this is only the material of knowledge; and the wise man is not he who knows much, but he who possesses the intellectual *habitus* whereby to judge rightly of what is presented by experience, as musical ability consists not in acquiring a large repertory but in having the spiritual and physical skill necessary for the making of music. But as the intellectual virtues or *habitus* disappear in Descartes and some of his scholastic predecessors, to give place to a purely materialistic conception of knowledge, so in Kant the whole idea of what we call character, the habitual disposition to act well, is jettisoned.

Again, to aim at happiness purely from a sense of duty is surely a psychological impossibility; Kant himself is obliged to admit that perhaps it has never been done; and there can be no obligation to do what is impossible, for, as he himself affirms, "ought" implies "can". "Every agent acts to achieve some end", as St Thomas says at the beginning of his ethic; for indeed if there is no desire of an end there will be no action at all, there will be no impetus to bring the activity about; and the respect for the law which Kant sets over against desire is in reality itself one of many possible desires.

The main characteristics of the theories of the right as opposed to the good, the priority of right and the opposition between duty and interest, are found again in some modern thinkers. The right, they hold, cannot be derived from the notion of the good, for this latter is unknowable, or at least only with difficulty discoverable; the good cannot be the end towards which the right is a means, for duty excludes interest, and it is impossible therefore to do an action both because it is right and also for the sake of something else. To this it may be said in the first place that the good is indeed undiscoverable if by good is meant the good of the hedonist. But the same cannot be said of the eudemonist. We have at least a hazy notion of what human nature is (using the word nature in its metaphysical sense: the

common specific possession of all men); we have in consequence some idea of that towards which it naturally tends; we cannot doubt that health, wisdom, virtue, are the proper objects of activity, the proper term of growth.

Again, are duty and interest incompatible? This takes us back to the point raised in discussing Kant's view: respect for the law is itself a desire, and as I may desire health both absolutely, because it is a good thing to be healthy, and also for some other reason, such as that I may be able to fulfil this or that engagement, so also I can desire a thing both because it is my good and because it is my duty. As Father D'Arcy has pointed out, "when we have a craving for some object or experience it is this object or experience which defines the end of our action and not the pleasure [which is attendant upon its attainment]. In the appetite for food it is the food which is desired, and we cannot separate the well-being of the body which results from the eating of this specific food; in knowing, again, it is the object as known. . . . If we separate these two we find by experience that we miss what we wanted; that is, if we make pleasure the end, the effect is ultimately to destroy the pleasure. Once this is recognized we have a principle of far-reaching importance; for first an object may be desired for its own sake and be at the same time for our advantage or happiness, and this so far from being the exception appears to be the rule."[9]

On the other hand, the theory under discussion seems to have no satisfactory solution of the difficulty of conflicting duties. The honest Jean Maillefer in his diary tells us: "At that time . . . I was so undecided as to what condition of life I ought to choose that I had simultaneously two wills in the matter; one, to become a Jesuit, the other, to become a Minim. And the Rev. Jesuit fathers dissuaded me from becoming a Minim, and the Rev. Minim fathers from becoming a Jesuit, and as both parties had reasons of practically equal force I believed both and was quite unable

[9] Cf. *The Good and the Right,* Proc. Aris. Soc., 1932, p. 185.

to choose."[10] Dilemmas such as this in the moral life must somehow be decided; I may be convinced that it is my duty to visit a dying friend and yet at the same time feel equally convinced that it is my duty to stay at home and do my job. How decide? For if ethics is a question of intuition, and if there can be *no reference to an end,* the problem must remain unsolved unless I am to say that one of my intuitions was mistaken, in which case the whole theory is undermined.

There is, then, no lack of cogent argument against the theories here considered. Yet on the other hand it is surely undeniable that there is much truth in them. Comparative ethics may have scotched intuitionism; it can hardly be said to have killed it. Intuition is distinguished from reasoning or ratiocination as immediate perception from discursive inquisition. The latter is the normal human method of cognition; but it is always, as St Thomas remarks, striving after the more perfect mode, and it can hardly be denied that to some extent we can and do have intuition of the truth. " There must be, in human nature, cognition of the truth which is without inquisition [i.e. is intuitive] both in speculative and in practical things. This cognition must be the principle of all that follows, whether speculative or practical, for principles must be more firm or certain; it must be naturally in man, as being the seed, so to say, of all subsequent knowledge; it must be habitual, ready to be used when necessity arises. And as in the human soul there is a natural *habitus* whereby it apprehends the principles of the speculative sciences . . . so too there is a natural *habitus* of the first principles of action, which are the natural principles of the natural law."[11] There is no question here of course of innate ideas; it is indeed characteristic of the general materialization of thought in the later Middle Ages that the doctrine of innate ideas should have come to replace the one put forward

[10] Cf. H. Bremond: *Ames Religieuses,* p. 86.

[11] *Quaest. Disp. de Veritate,* XVI, 1.

in this passage. "The light of intellect, which is in us, is nothing else than a participated likeness of the divine uncreated light in which are contained the eternal ratios of things. Whence to the question, Who shall show us good things? the psalmist replies, The light of thy Face is signed upon us, O Lord, as though to say, By the sealing of the divine light in us all things are proven."[12] Fr Horvàth comments: "This light illumines every man that comes into the world inasmuch as it is shared by him by way of a faculty naturally ordained to the true, and naturally using the participated light of the divine essence by way of principles in themselves luminous, perceptible, intelligible."[13] As St Thomas is careful to point out, this intellectual light is not the sole element in knowledge, "as the Platonists held that the participation in the Ideas was alone sufficient for knowledge"; we need the senses, and the activity of intellect in abstracting from sensibles the intelligible form. But the natural and habitual light of intellect enables us to grasp intuitively the truth of the first principles when their exemplification in reality is presented to us by the senses. Thus the principle of contradiction is not infused ready-made into the soul, but there is in the soul the propensity and ability to apprehend and thence to formulate it when experience offers the material in which it is verified. This is called the first principle, on which all others are founded, for *being* is what is first apprehended, and the law of contradiction is the assertion that being and non-being are contradictory and therefore incompatible: a thing cannot be and not be at the same time and in the same respect. "Now as *being* is that which is first apprehended absolutely, so *good* is what first falls under the apprehension of the practical reason which is ordered to activity: every agent acts for some end, which has the character of goodness. The first principle of the practical reason, therefore, is founded on the character of goodness, which is, that the good is what all things desire.

[12] *Sum. Theol.* I. lxxxiv, 5. [13] *op. cit.* p. 37.

And the first precept of the law therefore is that good is to be done, pursued; evil to be avoided. On this are founded all the other precepts of the law of nature. . . . The good has the character of end; evil, of the contrary. Everything then to which man has a natural tendency is apprehended by the reason as good, and therefore to be pursued in action; the contraries of these, as evil to be fled."[14]

The foundations of morality, then, are intuitively apprehended; particular judgements are indeed to be deduced from these, but that is the province of ratiocination, and it is here that differences arise, that other races than our own have other principles of morality; for particular judgements are not concerned with self-evident propositions, and the necessary work of reason may either not be done or be erroneously done.

But this fundamental intuition is not all. We in fact think that many moral laws are self-evident; we do not reach them by a process of reasoning, but apprehend them at once, intuitively, as right. Are such immediate apprehensions to be considered the effect of tradition, heredity, environment and the rest? It has often enough been argued that this is indeed all that our moral convictions come to; that if we lived in another part of the globe, or another period of the world's history, we should have equally strong convictions that the contraries of our present principles were right; and that therefore such a thing as an absolute right is absurd. In view of all that has been said, it is not difficult to reply that though the accidentals of humanity change, human nature in essence does not; that its end therefore remains constant; moral convictions which are viewed as intuitive must nevertheless be submitted to the scrutiny of reason, since the mere fact that they are accepted by a given race or at a given time does not prove their truth. But it is an argument which in this context should give us pause. On the one hand it is surely undeniable that a people does amass a quantity of

[14] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. xciv, 2.

moral conventions which, precisely because they are the result of incalculable influences, history, material environment, climate, manners and the rest, ought to be investigated. Grundyism is in our case an obvious example; but indeed it is questionable whether almost the whole of our present day morality is not merely the conventionalized residue of what was once a more or less rational ethic but has now become severed from the principles from which it derived, and altered and degraded by external influences or the ordinary process of inner decay into falsity. There are some things which we take for granted; we are inclined to regard our acceptance of them as intuitive recognition of self-evident truths; in fact, we may merely be following blindly a blind prejudice. Even the "first principles" have to be subjected to scrutiny; the philosopher must prove their validity even though the only method of so doing is the method of a *reductio ad absurdum*, as in Aristotle's discussion of triremes in the *Metaphysics*.

On the other hand, ratiocination, as was noticed above, is always striving after the greater perfection of intuition; and according to St Thomas it is the mark of the truly virtuous man that he does in fact judge intuitively where another would have to labour through the processes of discursive reasoning. For the possession of virtue brings about in the soul a connaturality with the virtuous; so that this action is intuitively perceived to be right and that one wrong. "A right judgement may be due to one of two things: either the perfect use of reason, or a connaturality with the things about which judgement has to be made. In the question of chastity, for example, a man who is learned in moral science will judge correctly through the perfect use of reason, but the chaste man will judge from a connaturality with chastity itself."[15] Such connaturality is not of course confined to moral judgments; the intuitions we have of those we love, the aesthetic vision, mystical know-

[15] *Sum. Theol.* II. II. xlv, 2.

ledge, above all the beatific vision, are to be explained on analogous lines; for it is through intuition, the crowning glory of man's intellectual life, that he achieves the fulfilment of another great thomist principle, that knowledge is not perfect unless it passes into love, since intuition is not merely the apprehension of an object but its possession in the closest of all possible unions.

Further, moral action presupposes science but is itself an art, the art of living. Moral science concerns itself first of all with general principles, as indeed being a science it must; but the subject of morality is not human action in general, but this or that human action, in this or that set of circumstances, and emanating from this or that personality. Hence the fact, remarked upon by Aristotle, that ethics cannot be an exact science. There is no set of ready-made rules to be applied to each individual case; the principles have to be applied, but this is the function of the virtue of prudence, and with prudence as with art, as Maritain points out, each new case is really a new and unique case, each action is a unique action. What constitutes the goodness of an action is the relation of the mind not to moral principles in the abstract but to this individual moral action. Hence an essential element of quasi-intuition is at least implicit in every willed and chosen action. Intuitionism is wrong in denying the importance of reason in judging of objective moral principles and in deducing from them more particularized rules of conduct; it is right in affirming the importance of intuition in seizing here and now the character of this individual case in its particular setting of circumstance and in its relation to a particular personality. This must be the case whether the agent possesses the appropriate virtue, and therefore the possibility of judgement by connaturality or no, but in the perfect state of affairs, when it is St Thomas's " virtuous man " who is the agent concerned, the moral action is doubly the issue of a sort of intuition : that which reveals to his mind the character of

the action in its particularity and its entirety; and that which causes him *quâ* virtuous, to sense its moral value or lack of value.

In intuitionism then, it would seem, there is much truth: the fact that it is with intuition that we begin, by means partly of intuition that we act, towards intuition that we aim; on the other hand, the theory fails to provide a satisfactory ethic in so far as it fails to provide a firm, objective criterion of validity.

Similarly philosophic legalism, the theory of duty for duty's sake, of the primacy of the right, is open to apparently insoluble objections; yet surely there is in it precisely the corrective of which the theories of the good so far considered stand in need. At any rate if it is the divine will which is in question, it offers an orientation which can preclude the danger of egocentricity. This need not necessarily be so, certainly. "That God has given a rule whereby men should govern themselves," wrote honest John Locke, "I think there is nobody so brutish as to deny. He has a right to do it; we are his creatures. He has goodness and wisdom to direct our actions to that which is best." So far so good; but he goes on: "and [he] has power to enforce it by rewards and punishments, of infinite weight and duration, in another life; for nobody can take us out of his hands. This is the only true touchstone of moral rectitude; and by comparing them to this law it is that men judge of the most considerable moral good or evil of their actions; that is, whether as duties or sins they be like to procure them happiness or misery from the hands of the Almighty."[16] This view seems to breathe the spirit of hedonism, the escaping of pain, the securing of pleasure: this will not save us from egocentricity. But the emphasis on sanctions is not essential to the legalist view. Accept the existence of God and of man's dependence on him and at once a definite relation arises for consideration. There is a natural obligation on the son to reverence the father; *a*

[16] *Essay concerning the Human Understanding*, Bk. I, ch. 28.

fortiori on the creature to acknowledge the supremacy of the Creator. Any ethical theory which ignores this relationship, which ignores religion, tends to fix man's thoughts upon himself, to be centripetal; and non-religious ethics, unless they are purely hedonist, must be legalist in the worst sense, stifling. But make God the centre and at once egocentricity becomes impossible; the whole impetus of action is directed outside the self. This is of course the essence of christianity, and the decay of the christian spirit is measurable by the degree in which christianity comes to be regarded as no more than a system of morals. " If christianity was morality," as Blake put it, " Socrates was the Saviour." Christianity is religion, and religion means relationship with God as him to whom, in St Thomas's words, " as to an unfailing principle we ought to be bound "; it means the offering to God of due worship and obedience; and the offering ought to be the offering of the whole man, since it is of the whole man that God, as Creator of all being, is master. The immediate acts of religion are sacrifice, adoration, and the like; but besides these there are the innumerable mediate acts which flow from other virtues as prompted and motived by religion, innumerable because there is no act which ought not so to be directed. Religion therefore lifts the whole moral life right out of the rut of formalist codes and pharisaism, and transmutes it into sacrifice and adoration; the ultimate motive of all activity becomes God's will; it only remains then for the grace of Christ to lift it still further through charity into the supernatural life. If legalism can be interpreted in this sense, then it cannot be denied that it provides the remedy for self-centredness and self-seeking; and in so far as it does at least include this element its claims cannot be ignored.

It can at least lead the way towards disinterestedness. And in that, no matter how insoluble the difficulties against the theories which have been here considered, we cannot but see the essence of sanctity and therefore the fulfilment of the moral life. If the essence of christianity is

love, then the essence of christian action will have the quality of all action of which love is the moving force: giving without counting the cost, serving without thinking of self, loving not self but the other.

We seem, then, as the result of the consideration of teleological and deontological ethics, to be set about with insoluble difficulties. Man cannot ignore his own happiness, his own fulfilment and perfection, even his own pleasure; yet he must be altruistic; he must act from disinterested motives; he must obey God's will and nothing else, and regard the whole business of conduct in terms of worship. He must act rationally, choosing means to end, yet his ethical judgements are to some extent intuitive; he must act freely, yet he seems half his time to be a behaviourist. Somehow, if an ethical theory is not to fall foul of the negative test mentioned earlier on, these seemingly irreconcilable elements must be incorporated into it. It remains to be seen whether St Thomas manages to achieve this result.

CHAPTER 6

The Thomist Moral Theory

THE THOMIST ethic is primarily teleological. Its basic principles are argued in the *Contra Gentiles. Omne agens agit propter finem:* every agent acts for the sake of some end; it is on this principle of finality that the whole theory is built. "If an agent did not press on towards some determined achievement all would be equally indifferent to him; and an agent who was indifferent to many things would not bring about one rather than another, so that it would be impossible for him to act at all. Every agent then aims at some determined effect, and this is called his end." This end is some good; for "that at which an agent determinately aims must be congruous to him, since he would not

aim at it unless it possessed some congruity for himself." The goal of every agent then is some good; and in the last analysis it is the *Summum Bonum*, the highest good, for " in every hierarchy of ordered ends the last must be the end of all those which precede : a physic is concocted that it may be given to a sick man, it is given him that he may be purged, he is purged that he may get slim, he gets slim that he may recover his health, and health is therefore the end of the slimming and the purging and everything else that preceded. In the same way all things are found to be graded in different degrees of goodness under one supreme good which is the cause of all goodness." And this cause of all goodness cannot be other than God. How then is God the end after which all things strive? " If a thing acts for the sake of some other thing already existing, and something is achieved as the result of its activity, then this must accrue resultant achievement to the thing acted for. So soldiers fight for the sake of their general, and victory, the fruit of their fighting, accrues to the general. But nothing can accrue to God as the result of activity on the part of anything at all, since he is his own perfect good. It remains then that God is the end of all things not in the sense that he is something achieved or effected by things, or that he can benefit at all from the activity of creatures, but in this sense alone that he benefits them." The end of creatures then is to acquire the goodness of God, that is, to " become like to God "; and this, not in the manner in which God's perfection exists in himself, since he is wholly simple, but according to their own mode of being which is to possess perfection not " in one but in many ". " A thing is made like to the divine goodness in all those elements which belong to its own proper goodness, and the goodness of a thing is not in its existence merely but in all those things which go to make up its perfection. So that things are directed towards God as their end, not only in their essential being, but also in those accidentals which go to

make up their perfection, and even in their proper activity, for this also belongs to the perfection of a thing."

That a thing should attain to its own proper perfection, then, is at once God's will for it and its own way of reaching God. Already in this principle the synthesis of right and good, of eudemonism and obedience to God's will, may be discerned. The end of every creature is its own self-realization, its own fulfilment; acorn grows into oak and kitten into cat; it is a metaphysical monstrosity for a thing to seek its own destruction, a necessity for it to seek its own perfection. " Every man of spirit," said the Sieur de Brantôme with lusty exaggeration, " wants to try his hand at everything "; " all things tend towards the compassing of their perfection " is the expression of St Thomas's view, *omnes appetunt suam perfectionem adimpleri, quae est ratio ultimi finis.* The theories then which advocate self-destruction in the name of the service of God are not merely sinning against man, they are sinning against God. They advocate in effect a rebellion against God's purposes in creating the world. Man is no exception to the general principle. He is, certainly, a unique expression of it, and this particularity must be discussed. The objective difference, the special way in which he comes to the likeness of God, may be left till later. There is a subjective difference also. Unlike inanimate things and animals, man is self-conscious and rational; he can decide for himself what is his proper end or good, he is self-determining. He is not simply taught by instinct what the end is, and led by instinct to pursue it; he uses his mind and makes his own decision, and the sense of responsibility resides precisely in the recognition that he is obliged to act so as to attain the end once seen. Physical necessity becomes moral obligation. Reason is the determining factor. But, as we have seen, rational processes are not the whole story. " In human nature there must be knowledge of the truth without rational inquiry, both in the speculative and in the practical order." The first principle of activity, itself self-evident,

enters into every practical judgement, and the rational processes therefore contain an intuitive element. Other intuitional judgements, fruit of heredity, upbringing and so forth, play their part; further, the quasi-intuition of the virtuous man comes gradually to supplant or supplement the purely rational judgements of the man in whom the virtuous habit is not yet formed. Reason remains the judge, the court of appeal; intuitive assents have, for certitude, to be examined in its light; but the pith of intuitionism is incorporated into rationalism.

Man is self-determining. But, as again we have seen, though this is the basic principle it does not contradict the fact, guaranteed by experience, that in practice man is often by no means self-determining. Ignorance, passion, coercion, these lessen or destroy the freedom of actions. In so far as they do so they carry them outside the realm of morality; for only the free can be morally good or evil. The psychological truth in determinism is salvaged; that truth once allowed, the limitations of the ethical theory are corrected by the basic assertion of free will, to which experience equally points. Nor is this the only context in which determinism finds a place in thomism. Just as the quasi-intuition of the virtuous man can supplant rational inquiry, so that the man judges not irrationally but suprarationally, so the quasi-determination of the virtuous man supplants the indetermination of indifference, so that he acts not by compulsion from without but by impulsion from within. *Coget me stimulus amoris*; the actions of the lover may be determined; he would rightly deny that they were not free. The fact of this inner impulsion throws light also on the truth contained in the legalist theory. St Thomas speaks of the first principles of action as a participation of the eternal law, and remarks that through it "every individual finding of practical reason must be reducible to the eternal law"[1]. But the eternal law is truth itself;[2] the arbitrariness of some of the legalist theories is excluded; it

[1] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. xciii, 3. [2] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. xcii, 4.

is in the seeking of his own perfection that the agent fulfils the law, for this latter is not an arbitrarily imposed code but the order of truth, truth as demanding realization in creative activity; and to this too exclusively self-seeking element is joined the element of obedience, and obedience to a person who is the object of love. And because love and therefore disinterestedness will grow as the agent comes nearer to his own perfection (since that perfection is primarily to be expressed in terms of union in love with God) it follows that the eudemonistic element is the more fully incorporated and realized as the disinterestedness it needs to correct it becomes stronger and deeper.

There is another point to be noticed. Strictly speaking there are no sanctions in the thomist ethic. One has heard it reported of certain academies for the young that their walls are decorated with an immense and protuberant eye, lest the little scholars forget that the grim vigilance of the deity is never relaxed, and that their misdemeanours, be they never so hidden and discreet, will infallibly be observed and they themselves pounced upon and cast into the pit.[3] Small wonder then if, when they emerge from their *status pupillaris*, they are incurably legalist and negativist, their eyes on the book of rules, their minds absorbed in the problem of not laying themselves open to celestial attack. They never of course achieve anything, they become stunted and lifeless; for the motive force of their lives,

[3] Compare the early experience of William Clissold: "The idea of God was very much entangled with the disciplines of my nurse and governess, and the most vivid memory I have of the divinity teaching of my Bexhill days was a highly illuminated card in an Oxford frame bearing the words:

Thou God seest me.

I believed that firmly, and it abased my private dignity to a reluctant propitiatory restraint of my private thoughts. . . . I was told repeatedly that I ought to love God, but I cannot remember feeling the slightest gleam of affection for that silent, invisible, dominating and dangerous spectator." (H. G. Wells: *The World of William Clissold*, vol. I, p. 58.)

far from being the possibility of achievement, is the necessity of non-commission. They may indeed be impelled to perform a number of pious *acts* (thought of as such, for this outlook can never envisage growth in personality, in perfection of *state*); but it is likely that their motive in performing acts will be merely the hope of avoiding perdition or curtailing as far as possible the duration of their purgatorial " time ".

The thomist outlook is the exact antithesis to this. Man is free; he can move either towards his end or away from it; he can choose or reject God. He is responsible; and as, philosophically speaking, it is normally his own fault if he ends in disintegration, so, theologically speaking, if he loses God it is because he has chosen so to do. We are accustomed to speak of " falling into mortal sin "; but unhappily we cannot claim the irresponsibility which " falling " implies;[4] and as sin is by definition deliberate, so the loss of God is the chosen end of deliberate aversion from him.

In practice of course we may licitly think in terms of sanctions, and sometimes it may well be our duty to do so. For the human personality is rent with civil war, the " spirit lusteth against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit "; and in consequence passion impels us to choose that which speculatively we know ought not to be done, and neglect that which we know ought to be done. The primrose path may be, as the good Jean Maillefer said, *un sot chemin*; that does not prevent our tripping down it. Therefore a counter-appeal to the appetites is a salutary thing. It is difficult to balance pleasure against speculative conclusions about the right and the good; less difficult, at least sometimes, to balance present pleasure against future and protracted pain. Precisely then because of the division

[4] Happily, on the other hand, we are not to think of ourselves as burdened with the guilt of mortal sin if we do something which is objectively gravely wrong but which for some subjective (and non-culpable) reason is not the result of a fully conscious, knowledgeable, deliberate choice.

of the personality, a desire to choose the right may well be strengthened by a consideration of sanctions; but it is a particularization of the general eudemonist principle of growth towards perfection that this consideration should decrease in emphasis, that the service of fear should give way more and more to the service of love, until the idea of a law attended by sanctions gives way wholly to that of a love which asks to serve and which, united with the loved will, knows no other law.

Quis legem dat amantibus?

asked Boethius, "who shall legislate for lovers?"; and as St Thomas answered a query about how one might become a saint, not with a list of precepts to be observed, but with the one word *velle*, "have the will to be one", so St Augustine defined the state of soul at which christianity aims when he said *ama et fac quod vis*, "love and then do what you will". The lover has, as such, only one sanction: the fear of hurting what he loves.

What is it, on the objective side, which distinguishes the way man comes to the likeness of God? For St Thomas, Aristotle was on the right road to answering the question. Man is not *angelus in machina*, a spirit in a machine. He is body-spirit, one substance, and this hylomorphism dictates the answer to the ethical question. "Some have held that, so far from a perfection of the body being necessary for beatitude, beatitude on the contrary requires that the soul be wholly separated from the body. So Porphyrius, quoted by Augustine in the *City of God*, said that 'for the soul to be blessed, everything corporeal must be fled'. But this cannot be so. It is natural for the soul to be united to the body, and the perfection of the soul therefore cannot exclude the perfection natural to the body."[5] The end of man is not to escape from the body so as to achieve the perfection of the soul; it is to achieve the perfection of the

[5] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. iv, 6.

whole man, body and soul together, to create the perfected personality. Hence many difficulties: precisely inasmuch as man is made up of different elements, with various and possibly conflicting potentialities, the perfection of the whole demands first a careful scrutiny, and then a wise and strong control, of the claims of each. It is less difficult to say what the creation of the perfected personality is not, in any given individual, than to say exactly what it is. It is not, first of all, the perfecting of any one element to the exclusion of all others. Over-specialization is a danger in ethics as in education. It leads to inhumanity, the denial instead of the perfection of nature. Again, it is not the perfecting of all potentialities without regard to the well-being of the whole. It is not a question of mere "self-expression": of blindly obeying all our urges the moment they make themselves felt: a procedure which, however comfortable, must lead in the end to disintegration. The curious thing is how easily this disintegration-process seems to be confused with the opposite process of self-perfection or self-realization, so that pious people can raise horrified hands at the ideal of christian humanism as at a diabolical paradox. There can be no wholeness without the harmonious inter-adjustment of parts; co-ordination implies subordination; the actualizing of the various potentialities demands a scale of values to be arrived at through inquiry into the relative claims of each. Body is less than mind, the perfection of the body less adequate to the demands of the person than that of the mind, and physical perfection therefore cannot take precedence over the perfection of the mind. And in knowledge itself there is greater and less: a knowledge of bees or book-keeping is less adequate to the powers of the mind than the possession of philosophical principles, which itself is perfected only in the knowledge of God. The end is not in riches or power or glory, it is God.[6] God-as-known; only here does the cognitive power find its adequate

[6] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. ii & iii; I. ciii, 2, ad 3; II. II. cxxii, 2; I. xliv, 4.

object. If we are talking philosophy, where there is no question of beatific vision or supernatural life, still only in the contemplation of God, in some sense or other, can man's true end and perfection, his highest activity, be found, as Aristotle pointed out. The singularity of man among creatures in the return of the universe to God its end is thus apparent: God is his end, his own perfection is his end, and these two reduce to the one concept of union with God to the highest possible degree.

More is included in this than knowledge. The notion of contemplation indeed implies that the object contemplated is or will become the object also of love. But it is further arguable, first that our relation to God must be one of worship, since it is of the natural perfection of the creature to acknowledge its Creator; it is to him, in St Thomas's words, that we ought "principally to be bound as to an unfailing principle", and again, "everything is perfected by submission to its superior",[7] so that the perfection of the soul is to be found in submission to God. Secondly, if we accept as demonstrable the idea that God is love, our essential relationship to him must be one of love; that, according to St Thomas, is a law of nature. Whereas, then, irrational creatures seek their end exclusively for their own sake, as an object of concupiscence, man must seek his end with *amor amicitiae*, as an object of personal love, and with obedience, as an object of worship. From the attainment of the end, joy must of course spring, for "love is the cause of joy"; and just as the idea of sanctions is admissible so long as it does not become the principal pre-occupation and oust the idea of disinterested service but on the contrary becomes gradually more and more subordinated to this latter, so the idea of happiness in the sense of subjective beatitude or the "sum of pleasures" is admissible (is indeed inescapable) but must be co-ordinated with the idea of disinterested love.

[7] *Sum. Theol.* II. II. lxxxi, 1 & 7.

Another fact should be included here. Man is a social animal. His beatitude, whatever it may be, is at any rate not a solitary satisfaction. Human nature is social, its end therefore must be social; and this means that not only the individual's perfection but that of others also must motivate his actions. That excellent eighteenth-century Dominican, Fr Worthington, was being a true thomist when he left as a legacy to his brethren an infallible cure for worms (just as he was being a true thomist when, one imagines, he himself reaped the benefits of his ingenuity). Altruism is included; the social life is an element in the end; it is also an element in the means. And it is not merely the altruism which in fact is a sort of sublimated egoism, prompted simply by the fact that without well-doing there can be no real well-being; it must be altruist in motive too, springing from real *benevolentia*, a question not of an impersonal though beneficent "organization" but of personal contact with and affection for individuals.

The need for a scale of values regulating these various elements in the perfection of the personality is evident. There is naturally in man a desire for the perfection of body, heart, mind; for the good of others; for God; how are these tendencies to be co-ordinated? Clearly God, to whom "principally we ought to be bound" must come first; and what will separate us from him must be forgone, however much it may seem to be for the advancement of some other tendency.[8] Secondly, benevolence and self-love, to use Butler's terms, must be set in their right relation to each other. The love of self, as experience would seem to show, is normally deeper and stronger than the altruistic impulse; and this is borne out by the divine command that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, self-love being

[8] To love the beauty and goodness that are seen is much easier than to love the invisible; what is obligatory is, to use a theological distinction, that God be put first, not *intensivè*, emotionally, but *appretiativè*, effectively, that is, that one be ready to lose the world rather than offend him.

thus the criterion; for the regulative, as St Thomas remarks, is prior to the regulated. True, commandments are one thing, counsels of perfection another: we can choose between "Do Well, Do Better and Do Best"; to save another by the sacrifice of one's own life is best, but if we are considering merely what is ethically right, Do Well, then charity can truly be said to begin at home. But again, there is hierarchy in the make-up of man; matter is clearly subordinate to spirit, and another's material gain cannot justify one's own spiritual loss: I may not do wrong in order to help another. There may be occasions when it is the duty of the individual to give up his life either for the common good or for an individual if the latter is in extreme spiritual danger; it is always his duty, according to St Thomas, to suffer bodily damage for his friend; but it can never be licit to incur spiritual damage for another. Again, some have greater claims upon our love and help than others; the nearer to us, the greater the claim; and in any case of conflict of duties, when one is faced with rival claims, it is this principle of greater nearness which must decide. Further, the principle of the primacy of the spiritual gives the clue to the way towards the perfection of the personality. I may not do wrong for the sake of some bodily or intellectual good; I may not put bodily perfection before the perfection of mind and heart; but body and sense-knowledge are to be perfected precisely as subordinate and subservient to mind and contemplation, while both elements together are to be brought to actualization in subservience to the supreme claims of God as object of knowledge, worship and love.

Object of love: there must be, as we have seen, disinterested service, since otherwise there could not be love, which, as St Bernard of Clairvaux said, seeks no other cause or end but itself. But disinterestedness means doing the right because it is the right, not because it is desirable: *caritas non quaerit bonum dilectum propter delectationem,* charity does not seek the loved good for the sake of the

pleasure to be derived from it;[9] and her eudemonism finally becomes one with deontology.

This synthesis is, it would seem, what Butler was trying to establish in his discussion of duty and interest, as indeed, in a more limited range, were Cudworth and Clarke in making the ockhamist legalism rational, and Cumberland in identifying God's will with altruism. Professor Broad regards Butler's co-ordination of conscience with self-love as "simply an inconsistency" and his assertion that cool reflection can justify no course of action contrary to happiness as a "hypothetical concession in the course of argument". But it might well be argued that in this on the contrary lies the whole value of Butler's inquiry. He held that benevolence and conscience may conflict; and there perhaps he did not sufficiently clarify the meaning of benevolence, by distinguishing what we might call short-term charitable activity from long-term *benevolentia*; but his assertion that at least happiness and conscience cannot conflict brings him very close indeed to the thomist view, if it can be allowed, as has already been urged, that by happiness he meant what St Thomas calls objective beatitude, the end, not merely enjoyment apart from any thought of end. It is this distinction which justifies the truth in eudemonism and makes it capable of inclusion in the thomist scheme. To seek one's own happiness in the sense of pleasure or self-gratification without thought of natural purpose is inadmissible, first, because of the difficulty of saying exactly in what such ultimate pleasure would consist: the attainment of each desired enjoyment leading ultimately to a realization that it has not made its possessor fully happy; secondly, because it is merely selfish. But to seek one's own happiness in the sense of one's own objective beatitude is very different. It means seeking the true end of one's capacities, one's perfection, and the joy consequent on this. From the attainment of the end pleasure will in fact flow because it is the activity most proper

[9] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. iv, 2 ad 3.

to the agent; but it is not opposed to altruism since in fact altruism demands as prerequisite condition that the agent shall be in a position best to help others, i.e. shall be himself perfect: a thing, says St Thomas, must be perfect in itself before it can cause other things.[10] Subjective beatitude alone is no criterion; objective beatitude is. To ask oneself merely: Will a career as a film star make me happy, i.e. be pleasant, is an inadequate question, for you cannot tell; to ask: Will it make me happy, i.e. fulfil the "somewhat of possibility" in me, and so, in consequence, be enjoyable, is a sound and sufficient question. You are justified in asking whether this or that action is making for your own objective beatitude, since in so doing you are *eo ipso* asking if it is right. Further, since God is absolute truth, the right is objectively and universally right, and Kant's universalizability maxim, as a criterion of the right, is justified.[11] The mind's object is universal and absolute; it follows that the object of the will is universal and absolute too. The right is law. But it follows from this again that human nature is its own law, since its right is its own completion. The ten commandments, for St Thomas, are precepts of natural reason. In that sense reason is autonomous; but we add that reason is the norm only because God, who works in all things according to their nature, so contrived the nature of man as to ordain his reason to know absolute truth, truth greater than himself, before which he must bow, reality being the measure of the mind, not mind the fabricator of reality.

Next, there must be the doing of God's will as such, i.e. because it is God's will—disinterestedness in terms of

[10] *Cont. Gent.* III, xxi.

[11] "Act on that maxim which thou canst at the same time will should become a universal law." Kant is justly accused of formalism in making this itself the moral principle, for of itself it is bare of content, and any deduction of less general principles from it is impossible. But as a *criterion* for the finding of the law the principle holds.

religion—and room is made in the scheme for this element of the theory of Ockham and his followers.

It may perhaps be agreed then that the various essential elements of an adequate ethic are to be found in the thomist theory; it remains to try to show that they are not merely collected together but really synthetized. But there is one other preliminary point. The utilitarian doctrine denies that motives have any place in the ethical judgement; on the other hand there is the theory that motives are the only things that count, and that one ought to act without regard to consequences. Here again St Thomas includes both things. *Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocumque defectu;* you have to consider the end of the action (*objectum*), the end of the agent (*finis*, motive), and the circumstances; if there is anything wrong with any of these the action is wrong.[12]

Let us now try to draw the various strands together. Starting from the divine activity, we may say: (1) God created man with a nature the end of which is its own perfection. (2) That perfection consists primarily in the knowledge, love and worship of God, in a perfected personality, in company with one's fellow-men. (3) Because it is man's duty to seek his end, and because on the other hand God is his entelechy and his happiness, it is his duty to seek his own entelechy (eudemonism) and his own happiness; and even, though not exclusively for its own sake, his own pleasure (hedonism) since pleasure is attendant upon congruous activity. (4) Since he may not seek a greater good for the sake of a lesser, for then he would be seeking his last end as a means to some other end and therefore not as his last end at all, he ought not to seek God (objective beatitude) merely for the sake of his enjoyment of God (subjective beatitude). In acting for God's sake primarily, man is *eo ipso* acting for his own sake. Duty for duty's sake (deontology) becomes eudemonist; and not duty for duty's

[12] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. xviii.

sake merely, but for God's sake in the sense of for the love of God; you serve what you love because you want to, and indeed because you have to—*coget me stimulus amoris*—thus do disinterestedness, deontology, even a sort of analogical determinism become one with eudemonism. (5) *Bonum ex integra causa*: every right action must be not in opposition to these norms of conduct. An action which is opposed to altruism cannot be defended on the score of eudemonism; an action which is for the good both of the agent and of society cannot be defended if deontology condemns it, if it is inconsonant with the absolute right. (6) But these values have their hierarchy, and here the conflict of duties can be decided. The highest value has the greatest claim. This scale is carefully worked out by St Thomas: the love of God being set above that of all other things, the lower rivalries between self and others, and among the others, and within the self, are rationally decided. (7) Lastly, neither motive nor consequences can be neglected: the action itself, the motive, the circumstances, must all be right if the action is to be right. Thus the standard of the objectively right action is composed. But this objective pattern is as yet remote from morality strictly as such, from the good; it must become subjectivized in willed action by the human agent before it becomes moral. When the honest shopkeeper hands me my right change across the counter he is doing a moral action; when the machine in Piccadilly Tube Station gives me my right change it is not. The event, the giving of just change, is the same; the character of the event is different. So it is that law is strictly speaking irrelevant to morality until it becomes subjectivized, assimilated by the agent, and the pattern of right action as defined by law is produced *ab intrinseco* as expression of the agent's mind and will. This is the ultimate test of morality as between external legislation and conscience; for an action consonant with law yet contrary to the conscience of the agent is bad, while an

action contrary to law but consonant with the conscience of the agent is good. And as goodness is that which gives value to the act, so it is only in so far as the objective norms have become part of the personality and thus characteristic actions as determined *ab intrinseco* that they have moral significance. It is to the achievement of this coincidence of objective and subjective in all things that the fight against legalist absorption in the external, and effort towards growth of the spirit in perfection, are directed. So, for the spiritual man law becomes assimilated into the autonomy of the person, and the idea of imposition from without necessarily passes into that of free and creative determination by the agent.[13] Thus the perfect action is that which, wholly determined *ab intrinseco*, is at the same time wholly consonant with the objective pattern which law, reason, and in the last resort God, establish.

The philosophical synthesis is thus complete. "How can one fail" asked Lytton Strachey, "to miss a great deal if one persists in considering the world from one or other side of the House of Commons?" We have reached a scheme of things in which every side is viewed. But would it work in practice? The knowledge of God possible to reason alone is so meagre that, since love depends on knowledge, the God-motive would in practice, in the majority of cases, be either non-existent or at least very weak. Almost certainly the synthesis would split up. In St Thomas's completed scheme, when he speaks as a theologian, this danger is absent. Beatitude is revealed and clearly defined as possible of attainment: the aggregate of all good things, the possession of God; revelation opens to us the mind of

[13] Cp. M. Maritain, speaking of the extrinsic regulation, imposed in the name of a higher end, to which art must submit: *Mais chez le chrétien cette régulation va sans contrainte, parce que l'ordre immanent de la charité la lui rend connaturelle, et que la loi est devenue sa propre pente intérieure:* spiritualis homo non est sub lege. *C'est à lui que l'on peut dire:* ama et fac quod vis; *si tu aimes, tu peux faire ce que tu veux, tu ne blesseras jamais l'amour.* (*Art et Scolastique*, p. 123).

God, and faith and the gifts of the holy Spirit help us to see things as he sees them: *omnia quasi oculo Dei intuemur*;[14] by faith we see all things as with the eyes of God; again, since we are made partakers of the divine nature the love of God becomes a possible intimate relationship, the *consortium Dei*. The struggle which the theologian describes in terms of grace and original sin is far from being an outmoded fiction; its reality is all too clear to us from our own experience, our knowledge of the evil and consequent misery which weigh down the world, as well as from the evidence of psychology, which describes something of the same conflict in terms of conscious volition and instinctive or unconscious drives. These drives and instincts are not to be destroyed and a new layer of supernatural desires planted in their stead: chaotic themselves, and potentially either good or evil, they are to be directed this way rather than that, to God and not to evil. But this again means, not that they must be wrenched from the pursuit of self-fulfilment, but that the nature of the fulfilment must be truly defined. We are not creatures of instinct in the sense that instincts will lead us where we ought to go; that is the difficulty. And the right direction of primitive instincts is a difficult business. To take it at its most obvious: it is far from sufficient to herd people into church; on the contrary, if once there they are presented with vapid statues and vapid sermons, and are made to sing of mindless yearnings to flee from this wicked world and rest in a somewhat negative but superlatively comfortable deity, their instincts are in fact being set precisely in the wrong direction: they are being suggested into subhumanity instead of helped towards divinity.

Grace is not magic; it does not work independently of nature, but builds upon it. It has therefore to make the best, so to say, of the material it finds, and if that material has been rendered unmalleable its effectivity is reduced. Growth in supernatural life is not of course deter-

[14] St Thomas: *Boeth. de Trin.* III, 1 ad 4.

mined by brilliance of mental powers, for supernatural wisdom is of the kind which overrides discursive reasoning and is in the phrase of the pseudo-Denys a *pati divina,* the experimental awareness which comes of sympathy or connaturality with divine things. But where there is not merely negation but privation; rather, where an attitude of mind is being positively acquired which is contrary to the growth which grace should promote, strengthen and elevate, then the work of grace is hindered. By the grace of baptism the soul is energized with those habitual dispositions to good action which we call supernatural virtues, but the effectivity of these is dependent on effort, and they will remain dormant or decay if that effort is lacking. It is possible to receive the sacraments with great frequency and emotional piety but to gain relatively little benefit from them because of this lack. Similarly with regard to growth of the personality in general: grace here as elsewhere perfects nature, presupposes nature, and cannot make good a privation of natural means.

And the point to be immediately emphasized is that this growth is an inner process, a movement from within; it cannot be imposed by violence from without. You cannot dragoon a man into holiness; you will either make him rebel, or you will reduce him to a level of subhumanity at which holiness in any real sense is impossible. We are told in the *Portrait of the Artist* of how the daily life of Stephen Daedalus was "laid out in devotional areas"; how he strove "by constant mortification to undo the sinful past rather than to achieve a saintliness fraught with peril", and was then surprised to find that at the end of his course of intricate piety and self-restraint he was so easily at the mercy of childish and unworthy imperfections: it was in fact hardly surprising. Only a moron could continue unperturbed an intensive programme of quantitative piety not prompted by love, and negative rather than positive. The process of divinization is radically the growth of love, and love has no liking for cash-registers.

It cannot be forced. James cannot be made to fall in love with Clarissa; on the other hand, once in love, he will rightly deny, for all that he has become "determinist", that his actions are forced. It is determinism from within, not from without. It is the same with the impulse of the Spirit of God "disposing all things sweetly": the wisdom and understanding which he gives, and the fruits of his indwelling which St Paul enumerates, are habits in the soul, but they are dispositions primarily of passivity, of being acted upon rather than of acting ("it is not expedient" said Aristotle, "to take counsel of human reason where divine instincts are given"); but though they thus denote obedience to a higher power, it is an obedience, willed and demanded, to a Spirit who draws only by the inspiration of love—*amore ipso spirativo et ponderosa quadam inclinatione.*

Dii estis—"I said: Ye are gods." Divinization is the end to which theology can point. It will not be irrelevant here to remark that even pantheism finds, not a justification of itself, but a fulfilment greater than itself in the christian scheme. Man becomes divine, not by a substantial fusion with God entailing the annihilation of personality, but by a personal divinization, through the union and identification which vision effects, the oneness of love and knowledge which is intuition. *Anima fit quodammodo omnia*, said Aristotle: the mind becomes in a manner all things; and St Thomas was able to include in the "all things" the Maker of them all. It is this process of divinization which ought to be begun by us on earth. The faculty of reason by which moral judgements are to be made ought now to be identified with God's mind, since it is the mind of man supernaturally illumined; illumined indeed to such a degree that judgement becomes an intuition rather than a ratiocination: the connatural judgement of the supernatural virtues, the quasi-experimental knowledge and intuitive judgements of the gifts of the holy Spirit; it becomes also a sort of determinism, not now to be

avoided as an emptying of humanity, but to be sought as a putting on of divinity, the free abandonment to the impulses of the Spirit of which John of St Thomas so profoundly wrote. It is a kind of sublimated pragmatism, since in the last resort all things work together for good, for the good of man; it is a pragmatism purified and made absolute by faith in the divine goodness and by trust in the ultimate victory of absolute values. It is altruism infinitely enlarged, and an altruism in which there can be no shadow of conflict with self-interest since the individual as a member of the Body of Christ is working for his own perfection in working for that of the whole body, and *vice versa*. For this is the ideal in view: a society made perfect, fulfilled even to the fullness of the stature of Christ, by the perfection of all its members. It is law in the great thomist conception of law: not an external constraint, an arbitrary code, but an intrinsic order, making for beauty, for the *splendor ordinis*, as physical laws make for beauty, and making for fulfilment precisely because freely realized in action.

Let us note here yet another incorporation. It was part of the ethic of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson that the moral sense which discerns the rightness or wrongness of actions is a kind of aesthetic sense, a sort of good taste. Virtue is a "lovely form", as Hutcheson expressed it; the good life is the aesthetically unexceptionable life. As it stands this theory would of course be glaringly inadequate: to make morality merely a matter of good taste is to empty it of most of its content and to invite degradation into the conventional formalism of the standards of what is "not done". Yet it enshrines a great truth. For St Thomas too goodness is beauty, though his definitions are greater and deeper; and the fulfilment of the law is the pursuit of beauty. Christianity is not one of the creeds that "refuse and restrain". It advocates a continuous growth, it finds its peak in the doctrine of the pleroma, the fullness of the Body of Christ.

St Thomas can incorporate hedonism because he gives happiness a new meaning; he can unite eudemonism and deontology because the essence of both is charity. The comprehensive richness of the thomist world-view thus appears in ethics as in metaphysics. And it is no longer merely a grand ideal, as the purely philosophical scheme would appear to be. It is thoroughly practical; it is applicable to every act. Conscience combines in itself the various norms: it is reason and intuition, it is an index to God's will, it is a participation of the eternal law. We need not be afraid to discuss right conduct in terms of eudemonism or of altruism if we do not neglect deontology; the right action will be consonant with all. *Bonum ex integra causa.*

It cannot be until we are beginning to achieve synthesis within our lives that we can hope to bring about synthesis without; we must be trying to be whole before we attempt to make whole. There is urgent need of synthesis. There is equally urgent need of a true teleology.

In one current of catholic thought, meaning by that phrase the thought of catholics, a marked change is apparent after the time of the Council of Trent. St Thomas's synthesis can be said in general terms to have consisted in a fusion of the platonist and aristotelean with the stoic tradition of ethical thought, the search for the realization within the personality of the idea of the good with obedience to an extrinsic right, a code. Other catholic thinkers often followed more exclusively the stoic tradition, partly because their teaching was of necessity concerned with commandments and counsels, or with the correction of abuses; yet even so, there was always present the idea of the good and of finality, the vision of God. But a trend of post-tridentine thought has been in a new manner legalist: St Thomas himself has been presented in legalist dress. The triumph of law in the thirteenth century would seem to have had its influence on the history of subsequent thought. "Magister Mainerius, who had been one of Abelard's

favourite pupils, cried one day with the voice of prophecy in the schools, 'Woe to the day when law shall kill the study of letters', and Giraldus Cambrensis, who heard him, saw it fulfilled."[15] But literature was not the only sufferer. "Law, either civil or canon, had become the *scientia lucrativa*. It is the lawyers to whom the key of the well is given, says Guiard, Chancellor of the University in 1238; a young man goes to theology for two years and gives it up for law, and is made an archdeacon, and though the more devout questioned as to whether an archdeacon could be saved, a good many were prepared to risk it."[16] One is tempted to see a connection between this victory and the legalist theology of a latter age. However that may be, the legalist theory is certainly very far removed from the spirit of St Thomas. It regards moral theology, as Père Tunmer pointed out in an article on this subject, as "essentially concerned with the study, interpretation and explanation of divine and ecclesiastical laws"; and the same writer continues: "We must say frankly that every ounce of christian instinct urges us to react against such a conception of moral theology and of the christian life. Admittedly this conception has been all too prevalent in contemporary theological literature. . . . Yet it is entirely alien to the traditional standpoint and the authentic catholic theology of the masters of the Middle Ages. It is a matter for thankfulness that the christian instinct and realism of the younger generation of present-day catholics is increasingly in revolt against this. The day is surely past for the 'moral systems' of the legalists whose whole effort was directed to precise delineation of the boundaries between what is allowed and what is forbidden. St Thomas Aquinas viewed things very differently. It was St Thomas who wrote the beautiful passage: 'That which is foremost in the law of the New Testament, and that in which all its power and strength consists, is the grace of the holy Spirit which is

[15] Helen Waddell: *Wandering Scholars*, p. 131.

[16] *ibid.* p. 132.

given by faith in Christ. Thus the new law itself is first and foremost the grace of the holy Ghost which is given to believers in Christ.' And St Thomas has a magnificent conclusion to the article from which we have quoted; he tells us that whereas the law of Moses was essentially a 'written' law—that is to say, positive law externally imposed—the new law of Christ is above all a law 'inscribed' by the indwelling holy Ghost in the very hearts of men in a state of grace; a living law which moves men and impels them forward to God their last End."[17] So the teaching of St Catherine of Genoa, expounded by von Hügel in his *Mystical Element of Religion*, emphasizes the fact that "holiness consists primarily, not in the absence of faults, but in the presence of spiritual force, in Love creative, Love triumphant—the soul becoming flame rather than snow, and dwelling upon what to do, give and be, rather than upon what to shun". And a German theologian, Dr Pieper, in an article *Ueber das christliche Menschenbild*, urges the importance of recovering and reaffirming the pre-tridentine point of view: the "opening sentence of St Thomas's moral theology expresses a truth which we christians of to-day have almost entirely forgotten: the truth that morals deals first and foremost with *man*, that its task is to explain what man should be like—the ideal of man—and that consequently christian morals should portray the christian ideal of man. In medieval christianity this truth was taken for granted. But it soon came to be overlooked, and already, two generations after St Thomas, Eckhart had to remind his contemporaries that people should not concern themselves so much with what they should *do*, but rather with what they should *be*. Later on, owing to a variety of causes, moral theology came to lose sight of this view of things altogether: so much so that even those text books which claimed to be *ad mentem Sancti Thomae* differed from him on this fundamental

[17] Ceslaus Tunmer, O.P.: *The Spirit Quickeneth, Blackfriars*, Nov., 1935.

point. This is one of the reasons why it scarcely occurs to the average christian of to-day to look to moral theology or philosophy for information regarding the true *being* or the ideal of man. Rather do we associate with morals an exposition of what we are to *do*, and still more, what we are *not* to do: a codification of commandments and, still more, of prohibitions. . . . Naturally [moral theology] treats also of doing and not-doing, of obligations, commandments, sins. But its primary proper concern, on which all the rest depends, is the true being of man, the portrayal of the 'Good Man'." And he concludes: "It is, I think, a not unimportant concern to restore this sublime ideal of classical theology to the consciousness of our age. . . . Not because of historical sentimentality, but because this view is still valid; and not only valid, but because it is, I believe, a matter of life and death for us to recover and reaffirm it."[18]

Dii estis: "I said: Ye are gods." If deontology for all its grandeur is arid, legalism is suicidal and petty at once. As divinization is the end of the thomist scheme, so it is the keynote of the way towards the end: the gaiety of the man in whom there is neither self-destruction nor crushing legalism nor the pettinesses of pharisaic formalism, but the wholeness of purpose of an integral personality. We have to beware, in our world, of that conventional morality, the vernacular of scientific legalism, which is so diametrically opposed to teleology, to the recognition of the necessity for realizing in the self the idea of the beautiful and the good. How far our civilization, forgetting the Gospel, the good news, the redemption of fallen human nature into a new divine adoption, seems sometimes to have fallen, not only from the divine splendour of the christian ideal, but even from the natural grandeur of the revelationless Greeks! What would they, at their best, think of our industrial slums, our suburbs, of many of our conventions, of our bureaucratic or totalitarian despotisms, our social vanities,

[18] Cf. "*Extracts and Comments*", *Blackfriars*, June, 1936.

our commercial squalors? They at least worshipped beauty, and it is the secret of the blazing clarity of their culture; and they worshipped it in deed and in truth, as a divinity to be put on as far as was possible, transforming flesh and blood into poetry and rhythm, transfiguring the soul with light. Have we not in effect lost this conception? A fundamental forgetfulness of the meaning of christianity, of the idea of personality and the ideal of growth in love, would seem to be the root cause; and the danger for the christian in such an atmosphere is that religion for him too may become mechanized, and life discontinuous, broken up into unrelated fragments; that morals may assume a legalist dress, an emphasis upon a code in which conduct is to be confined, with in consequence a self-complacent conviction of a yawning hell waiting for those who do not keep the rules. There is a depth of theology in the line of the *Copa*:

a pereat cui sunt prisca supercilia:
"let him be destroyed whose eyebrows are upraised. . . ."

The satisfied judge is so often in worse case than the sinner; for if it is bad to go through life selling one's birthright for a mess of pottage it is worse not to realize that one has a birthright. We may spend our time making howlers in our lives as at school we spent our time making howlers in our Latin; but at least we should avoid in our outlook and intentions the legalist fallacy. To keep religion in a pigeon-hole and let the rest of life look after itself in isolation from it is not to live but to disintegrate. Having recognized the end, we have to build up the whole personality towards it; the need for a true teleology and the need for synthesis coincide.

This is in fact the ultimate synthesis which the principles of christianity can achieve: the union of theocentricity with humanism. The greatness of Greece is not lost, while its substantial imperfections are remedied. "To wish to

separate christianity from everything human, and consequently from humanism," says Père Charmot, " is to fail to realize that one is taking from the Church her proper characteristic of catholicity. It is to turn christianity into a sect. . . . 'One has to wait for the Reformation,' writes Gilson, 'to find the naturalism of the ancients rejected as irreconcilable with christianity.' "[19]

It may be felt of all teleological systems of ethics, and of humanism perhaps in particular, that they are magnificent while fortune smiles, but sadly out of tune in their optimism with a life too full of troubles and sorrows. How, we might ask, can we set about this glorious pursuit of a glorious end when life is a day to day struggle, and one is miserable and stupid and weak? How, still more, when one's world is weighed down with evil and misery and darkened by fear of total extinction? It is here that St Thomas the theologian has an answer. He can appeal to the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ: a common life, flowing from a common source, strengthening all members alike, and giving the smallest and most fruitless striving and the greatest, most desperate misery a meaning as functionally, organically, helping towards the fulfilment of the Body as a whole. To see a religion as a mode of living the whole of one's life; to see God's laws as the pattern of a duty which gives human nature its fullest glory; to see morality as the positive realization at once of personality, function, experience, and worship, into the possession, in a perfected self and a perfected society, of that love which in St Thomas's words is the *ultimum intentum*, the final aim, of the eternal law—this is the core of the thomist system.

But there is one further and deeper difficulty. The doctrine of the Mystical Body, it may be said, can perhaps offer some consolation to the man whom outward circumstance would otherwise have made hopeless, though it is at best cold comfort; but it does nothing to answer the practical difficulty inherent in the theory itself, the failure to

[19] *L'Humanisme et l'Humain*, pp. 123-4.

which all experience seems to point. Who, it will be argued, has ever achieved such a synthesis? And if nobody, then is it not self-condemned? On paper it may seem to represent christianity; but look at the christians! Montesquieu's wicked Troglodytes were scarcely in greater confusion, and perhaps were, if anything, less paltry. The result of the christian's cult of purity: a mixture of fear and prurience; of his charity: sentimentality outside business hours; of his attitude to the body: an agglomerate of irrational taboos; of his attitude to the mind, a timid circumscription. . . .

We might well reply to this that to base one's judgement on the behaviour of individual christians is unfair; we all, more or less, fail to live up to our principles; and, as has already been remarked, grace normally speaking cannot function fully where nature fails to play its part, and we have most of us, for a variety of causes, a noticeable deficiency on the natural side. But this reply will hardly do. We should expect of the christian saints, at least, a faithful realization of the ideal; this is surely what sanctity implies. Yet do not the saints often seem to be far from the ideal of wholeness? And does it not seem to be the frequent testimony of experience that christianity itself is often such as to make the carrying out of a humanist programme impossible, in the sense that the christian finds his religion for ever blocking his way, forbidding him this and that, cutting across ambitions however congruous to his natural capacities, affections however fine?

We are nearer to a true answer when we remind ourselves once again that humanism is not self-expressionism. The actualizing of the potential in us does not mean striving after perfection in every conceivable aspect of life. The whole Smith is not the same as the whole Robinson, for the potential Smith is not the same as the potential Robinson. It is not possible to be even fairly good at everything, and the result of trying is dilettantism, not humanism. Each of us has his own particular line, more or less clearly defined by his own potentialities; each has subsidiary cap-

acities in other directions; nobody has capacities in all directions. The difference between christian humanism and manicheism is not that the former bids us strike out in every direction while the latter would have us concentrate on one, but that the former urges the achievement of union with God through a unified perfection of the personality indicated to each individual by his own particular powers, while the latter regards the personality, or at least a large part of the personality, as something to be ignored and if necessary destroyed.

There are men who have concentrated all their abilities and devoted all their time to the achievement of some great objective the very nature of which forbids any tarrying over lesser interests; and these are fulfilling their own particular possibilities precisely by this exclusive concentration, and we do not call them half-men, we call them great men precisely because they have achieved something great and fulfilled themselves in the achieving. And why should we deny to the mystic what we so readily grant to these? "That it should be so is perhaps the ultimate proof of the power of matter, the depth of the warfare between the spirit and the flesh. . . . A man must follow his star. We do not grudge it that [men] should have left wife and children and lands and reason for the flick of a needle on a speedometer or a 'still life of a pair of shoes'. The only field of research in which a man may make no sacrifices, under pain of being called a fanatic, is God."[20] Such men *may* become stunted, *may* become half-men: the academic philosopher who becomes a bookworm and no man, the businessman who becomes a commerce-machine, the lawyer who becomes a codex, these fail, but it is not because their specialization has led them to adopt this line rather than another, but because their concentration on this has excluded, unnecessarily, all interest in the value of any other. The man who devotes his life to the advance of medical science cannot perhaps be a first-rate musician; he

[20] Helen Waddell: *The Desert Fathers,* Introduction, p. 25.

can appreciate the value of music. There is such a thing as an ascetic who values good wine; indeed, he is the only ascetic, for the man who abstains and does not value is not an ascetic but, as St Thomas would say, an *agrestis,* a bumpkin. Humanism demands, not that a man should be everything, but that he should have his eyes and his heart open to the beauty of everything. And if christianity commands this thing and one remains poor, that thing and one remains celibate, the other, and one submits one's will to authority, this does not mean that the valuing of the good things of life is precluded or that the personality is stunted. Self-sacrifice, as has often been pointed out, is self-fulfilment. We dislike control—"Damn braces" said William Blake—but we know its necessity. And the man whose principles hinder enrichment or marriage or any one of the endless possible experiences and joys of life *may* become stunted indeed but need not; for these very reversals and denials can open and enrich the soul in a way impossible to placid progress and affirmation.

A deep distress hath humanized my soul:

Père Charmot, in his *L'Humanisme et l'Humain,* has defined humanism in the narrower sense as *une certaine douloureuse finesse dont on ne voudrait pas ne pas souffrir.* Christians may talk much of purity, charity, truth, and may turn these things in practice into prurient fear, smug sentimentality, narrowmindedness, for we are all "worthless servants"; christianity does not. It sets purity before us as a positive ideal, that clarity, that "shining out of form through matter" or perfect harmony of spirit and flesh, which is part of beauty; it shows us charity as the adherence of the will to Love, to the Good, as that energizing, expansive love of God and his creatures which issues, by inner impulsion, in loving actions; it shows us truth as God himself, reflected in his creatures and so assuming a variety of

forms, obscured perhaps by error but never wholly absent, the end and explanation of every quest however apparently misconceived. Christians have sometimes made negation their object; christianity's aim is always affirmation.

But what, it is sometimes argued, of the christian doctrine of mortification? And the example of the saints is again adduced, who certainly seem to be on the side of the negativists. There is indeed mortification in the christian scheme, not only in the sense of asceticism, a training of the self in order to achieve a more perfect fulfilment, for this is not specifically christian, but also in the sense of atonement for sin, and of the "following of Christ" into his sacrifice, into some small sharing of his redemptive sufferings for humanity. The days bring their burden of suffering if principles are to be carried out; it is in the acceptance of these with "glad heart", as St Thomas remarked, that the essence of christian mortification consists; but even if, like some of the saints, one goes further and seeks out suffering, still humanism is in no way threatened if the suffering is really suffering, if the loss is really loss, inasmuch as what is forgone is valued, being forgone only for the sake of something greater.

But this does not wholly answer the difficulty with which some of the saints' lives confront us. Even when we have discounted the exaggerations and falsifications of hagiographers it remains true that these saints seem to despise all that is not God, and so to stand as an authoritative confutation of all that has been here said. "Perhaps it would be well," wrote Gwendolen Plunket Greene, "if the biographies of saints could be purged once for all of their well-meant but disconcerting descriptions (which foster prejudice against religion in the non-religious) of the strange practices and methods of training which have been followed for some reason or another by devoted lovers of God. . . . It is not in these queer practices that holiness abides, rather they are the shell within which it hides. Imperfection dogs the feet

of all humanity, no one of us is without fault, and even saints can be mistaken. . . . The love which prompts such practices is far from common, and it is this we should concentrate upon instead of those things which rather spell confusion than emit peace." "The curious things recounted in some of the older lives of the saints seem to have little in common with the balanced temper and life of Christ, the singularly rich and right temper of christianity; and it is this sober, sane temper that we want." "We have gained a fuller knowledge of the human creature's needs and reactions to-day; we know by experience the neural cost of many hours of prayer; we know that such, coupled with, or even without, great fastings, produce emotional disturbances, which in their turn produce effects neither desirable nor harmonious. We are less likely to-day to confuse such things with the supernatural, just as we no longer look upon illness as a possession of the evil one. But we might carry the movement even a little farther, with advantage; ignore as of no consequence the un-normal acts and happenings which, due mostly to natural and physical causes, are only too easily arrived at in any religiously concentrated life."[21]

We can of course point to saints such as Thomas More of whom these things are very definitely not verified; to Augustine's love of beauty which was not dimmed, to Francis's joy in nature which was not quenched, by the love of Christ. The pattern of all holiness, our Lord himself, shows us alike through his gracious first miracle and through his parables, as well as through his personal gestures of tenderness, how deeply he values the gracious and lovely things of life. On the other hand, as the spirit of the Renaissance was present in St Thomas More, so the puritan spirit of an age will have its effect on the personalities of other saints, for sanctity is not a sudden thing, it does not just suddenly happen, it is the result of a life of struggle and growth, and the growth is from what nature has implanted. But again, "who shall

[21] *op. cit.* pp. 105-11.

legislate for lovers"? The fact of sanctity means the fact of the discovery of God, and if human love can lead a man to throw away all he values (and we may cry pity but we do not blame) why not the same, more emphatically, of the love of God?

The important thing is, in the first place, to remember what von Hügel, for example, wrote of the "inhumanity" of St Catherine of Genoa: that the "impression of such inhumanity is, in so far as it is derived from authentic documents, entirely caused by and restricted to her early convert reaction, and her late overstrained or worn-out psycho-physical condition"; and in the second place to remember, as M. Maritain has pointed out regarding the "scorn of creatures shown by the saints which is so much in evidence in the history of hagiography", that "we must not be misled by the expression, which reveals chiefly the feebleness of human language. The saint sees, practically, that creatures are nothing in comparison with the God whom he loves, the End he has chosen. His scorn of them is the scorn of the lover for whatever is not the beloved. But the more he despises creatures as God's rivals, as objects of a possible preference over God, the more he cherishes them inasmuch as they are loved by God, truly made by him, and worthy of being loved. For to love a thing in God and for God does not mean treating it as a mere means, a mere occasion of loving God; it means loving it and treating it as an end in itself, because it is worthy of love. . . . So is explained the paradox that at the last the saint embraces in a universal love of friendship, of *pietas* . . . all that is fleeting, all the beauty and the feebleness of created things, all that he has left."[22] That he should have left them, at the call of God, left

> *Delight in sense, in learning and in thought,*
> *Music and philosophy, curiosity,*
> *The purple bullfinch in the lilac-tree,*

[22] *Humanisme Intégral*, p. 82.

The tiltyard skill, the strategy of chess,
Love in the garden, singing to the instrument[23]—

that he should have left all these is no stumbling-block to the christian humanist, provided only that he loves what he leaves. Humanism does not mean equating God and creatures: it means affirming that God should be known and loved in and through creatures, and creatures in and for God, the infinite disparity between them being neither forgotten nor diminished; it means affirming that the vision is only to be attained through a process of self-abnegation or purification; and that to glorify creatures to the disparagement of God and the claims of God would not be humanism but the denial of humanism. As Evelyn Underhill pointed out, the " drastic because love-impelled process of self-abandonment, often regarded by eager humanists as destructive of personality, is really in the highest degree creative. Indeed, it is the only way in which man can achieve full personality: for it means the integration of self about its highest centre, the fine point of the spirit, and its restoration to that life of worship for which it was made."[24] Only when the primary object of our endeavour is, not fulfilment apart from God, but God himself, and fulfilment in and for God, only then is fulfilment truly found. So Fr McNabb speaks of Christ sending Mary Magdalen away from him, " from the consolation of his presence to the greater consolation of his will."[25]

There is another factor to be considered. Love makes the good of the beloved the first object of the lover's will. The saints are on fire for the realization of the will of God; life on earth appears to them the all too short day in which they can labour for that realization, for " the night cometh when no man can work "; they look upon themselves as soldiers who can carry only the bare necessities, whose

[23] T. S. Eliot: *Murder in the Cathedral.*
[24] *Worship*, p. 188. [25] *God's Way of Mercy*, p. 5.

lives must, if necessary, be sacrificed for the good of their land, and they look forward therefore to the future for the leisure to enjoy those things which here they set aside. Perfection and duty will still coincide; at least, in Butler's words, "for the most part in this world", and certainly "entirely . . . if we take in the future". "A man" wrote H. G. Wells in *The World of William Clissold,* "may live a quarter or a third of his time in a study or a laboratory keenly engaged upon things that have nothing whatever to do with his intimate personal drama, activities that add only to the common inheritance."[26] But in fact such things have a great deal to do with his personal drama, they are, at least if he is "keenly" engaged upon them, precisely *his* drama because his proper form of contemplation and of activity, of development towards his proper completion. Even a life of utter self-abnegation in a leper hospital implies in fact an intense, if narrow, personal experience and growth. The call to renunciation of this or that or the other comes to us all; it does not contradict the theory, or supplant it by manicheism and denial; it does not alter the fact that

there is good news yet to hear and fine things
to be seen
Before we go to Paradise by way of Kensal Green.

St Thomas's moral doctrine does not aim at the niggardly ordering of the individual's conduct in blind obedience to a code. It is a cosmic scheme; its end is God's glory and the *ordo universi,* the fulfilment of the world. It is not solely self-love, however sublime; it is not merely altruism, however grand; it is not merely obedience to a law; it is not the service, however disinterested, of an impersonal absolute, nor obedience to a capricious God; it is the communal striving, motived by the love which is, as St Thomas says, *congregativus,* not, like selfishness, *disgregativus,* after the

[26] Vol. I. p. 91.

life of God, the *interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*, of which the presence and companionship of the first Love is the essence. The disorder of our days must compel us to do what little we can to remedy it; in our individual judgements we may often be at fault, and even when there is clear appraisal and true judgement there is our sinfulness which mocks at ideals and standards we know to be right. But at least we can try to secure a just outlook; to keep a sense of direction; to develop the depth and breadth of what might be called the teleological mind; and by fighting legalism as well as antinomianism or agnosticism to help others perhaps to develop it also. "Talk" wrote Francis Bacon, "is but a tinkling cymbal where there is no love": perhaps it is not too much to hope that we shall be helping to bring order into our world if our talk like our tenets is free of intolerance, and motived by a wholeness and a love the origin and pattern of which is that divine charity which we believe to be, in our scheme of things, the beginning, the key, the eternal consummation.

PART TWO

Essays In Application

CHAPTER 7

Thomism and Integration

"THE CENTRAL problem of our time, from the point of view of a christian philosophy of history, is the problem of the re-integration of the masses, separated from christianity by the fault chiefly of a christian world renegade to its calling." So M. Maritain writes in his pamphlet *On Independence*; and, the problem stated, he goes on to establish the principles on which it is to be solved. The dilemma is clear: as he here repeats, men will turn for their philosophy of life either to materialism or to christianity; to a humanism either atheist or *intégral*. It is becoming more and more clearly recognized that to attempt to deal with the visible evils of our time without attending to the attitude of mind responsible for them is to fiddle; it is only by the discovery and establishment of principles, of a world-view, that they can ultimately be remedied. For the christian this means the re-establishment of christian principles: but how re-establish them?

There are two conflicting schools of thought. There are those, first, who form what may be called the separatist school. For them, the christian world should be a fortress set above the dissolute flux of pagan thought and life, remote, immune. In economics this point of view has found expression in a sort of primitivism, a flight from the evils of our industrialism to a state of nature as the only possible vindication of the dignity of man. In sociology a similar

gospel of segregation has been preached: if the christian life is to be possible, it is argued, it can only be by way of complete retirement; an all-christian city is thus envisaged, wherein life may be compact of equity and love, the law may never be flouted, the spirit may grow to perfection uncontaminated by the breath of sin. In religion and philosophy, again, the same attitude is apparent; and issues in a refusal to acknowledge the possibility of benefit from the thought, the religious experience, of others. Let us cut ourselves off, then, this theory urges, from whatever is non-christian; let us set up, unsullied, unmixed with error and evil, the city of God, and so offer an example to the unhappy infidels who prowl without.

The exponents of the second theory, whom we may call the integrationists, diametrically disagree. They will not jettison man's progress in knowledge and power simply because it has in fact resulted in a social structure vitiated or even rotten to the core, for they distinguish between this progress itself and the use which, unnecessarily they hold, has been made of it. They will not sacrifice the wealth of experience, and the consequent possible growth of soul, which contact with their fellow men affords; nor on the other hand will they forgo the possibility of contributing directly to the good of human society as a whole, for indeed they consider this their duty as christians. They will not admit that the interests of the christian should be bounded by the limits of his own ecclesiastical orbit and the events which there occur, or that may not be enlightened and enriched by the thought and the religious experience and practice of the rest of the world.

Separatism or integration, this is the dilemma. Are we to flee from the world about us, or are we to accept it as our proper environment, an environment which it is all the more necessary to make our own because it so pre-eminently needs the help which each can in some measure give to it?

The question is complex, and the answer cannot lightly

be given. We are commanded, so the separatist might argue, to seek first the kingdom of God and his justice. We are bound, in other words, to see first of all that our environment is such as will make possible the living of a complete christian life. In fact, it is not. We ought then to segregate ourselves from our environment. True, there is no question, at the moment, in this country, of religious persecution; but the whole structure of life, the economic and social conditions in which we have to live, the sort of influences with which we are surrounded, are largely anti-christian. We can build our churches, we can hold our religious services; but this is only one element in the christian life; and with many other elements our civilization interferes. As the Hebrews were led by God out of Egypt, as the Desert Fathers went forth into Nitria and the Thebaïd, so ought we to be ready for the day when we may go forth to found a new city where the full service of God and perfection of man will be possible.

We cannot deny the weightiness of this argument. But there is a counter-argument from the integrationist side. The Hebrews, it may be replied, were led forth from an alien land; we are not in an alien land. The Hebrews had no duty to fulfil towards the Egyptians; but our civilization is part of ourselves. "To the Roman civic conscience the exiles in the desert [the Thebaïd] are deserters from a sinking ship, fugitives from a rotting civilization, concerned only for their personal integrity. Augustine had the civic conscience: the sack of Rome sent him to his book of reconstruction, a city that had foundations, whose maker and builder is God, but a city that could be built on the rubble of the Empire, even as Blake would have built Jerusalem among the dark Satanic mills."[1] The society in which we are living is *our* society; it is still, however remotely, the potential city of God; are we justified in abandoning it? We cannot argue that we have little influence upon our society; every member of a society has

[1] Helen Waddell: *The Desert Fathers,* Introduction, p. 17.

his influence upon it in one way or another, and our collective influence upon it might be immense. And every christian is, as such, meant in one way or another to be an apostle; he has a mission to fulfil, for he believes, in humility, that he has been entrusted with the talent of truth, and he is not permitted to bury it in a napkin. We may be strongly tempted to relapse into cynical inertia, to murmur gently:

Somehow, Eustace, alas! I have not felt the vocation,

and to leave the world to look after itself; but that attitude is un-christian. And this line of argument is the kernel of the integrationist thesis.

M. Maritain, taking this duty of working for the good of society as a whole as axiomatic, is unequivocal in stating his own position. "Let me here state the inner conflict," he writes, "which to my mind hinders so many generous efforts for the expansion of the kingdom of God. There is the social or sociological instinct of earthly collectivity, an instinct which is worldly. This would set up christians in a closed system . . . a fortress built by the hand of man, behind whose walls all the 'good' may be assembled, thence to do battle against the 'wicked' who besiege it. There is on the other hand, the spiritual instinct, an instinct which is of God; this would have christians disperse throughout the world which God has made, to bear witness within it, to bring it to life."[2] "How shall men, separated from us by the battlements of age-long prejudice, take account of our faith if we, instead of reverencing their souls, their aspirations, their anxieties of spirit, remain entrenched in pharisaic isolation?" The christian must "go into the world, speak to the world, be in the world and penetrate the world to its uttermost depths, not only to give testimony to God

[2] *Lettre sur l'Indépendance*, p. 14.

and to eternal life, but to do, as a christian, his human work in the world."[3]

Man is, as has so often been said, by nature a social animal; his own nature demands that he live in society. This means more than that no individual is self-sufficient in the business of living. The experience of every man affects the experience of the race; the nature of every man is affected by the past history of the race. We are all of us different men for the existence of Plato and Caesar and Shakespeare; we cannot separate from ourselves the common heritage of our race and age; and as we are constituted not absolutely, in isolation, but in the solidarity of the past, so we are here and now active, dynamic, not in isolation but in the solidarity of the present; and if we are renegade to it we are trying to rid ourselves of ourselves, to reduce ourselves to the unreality of a two-dimensional figure. On the other hand, if the individual stands in need of and is largely constituted by society, society in its turn, the *bonum commune*, stands in need of and is built up by the individual: it is the duty of each to play his part in the perfecting of the whole.

If philosophy makes this sufficiently clear, religion gives it at once a new urgency and a wider significance. The Fall from grace was the fall, not of one man only, but of all mankind. The Redemption in its turn is the redemption not only of individuals but of mankind as a whole. The solidarity of the race is divinely taught us, and its implications are clear. What is the world we must hate and flee if we are to obey our Lord's injunctions? Is it necessary to say that it is not the world which God created and saw to be good, but that spirit of worldliness which seeks self in opposition to him, a spirit which is not localized, restricted to or visible in a group or type, but invisibly everywhere where sin has entered? "No need to ask, which is the world we hate. . . . The lover of God

[3] Maritain, *op. cit.* pp. 23, 25.

becomes to himself the hated world, as he learns the evil within him. . . . 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son': and our Saviour died for the world, begging forgiveness for those who knew not what they did: and our Lord knows and loves his own, and loves those turned away from him, searches after those who are lost. If we do not love, we do not know God, and 'he that loveth not, abideth in death'. Actually then we must also love the world, overcome its evil with good: and we overcome the world through love of Christ, who gives us this power. We must not despair of the world. 'Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.'"[4]

As in the whole texture of earthly life the successes and failures of the world are our successes and failures, we bound up with them, they needing our share of help, so in religion we have to recognize that we have much to learn from the world whose faith is not ours (for it would be intolerable pride on our part to suppose that we have so well used the gift of faith that there is, in our expression of it, our worship, our way of life, our spiritual growth, nothing to be corrected or improved, nothing to be learnt from those who, loving God, may well be granted a light perhaps denied to our opacity); and we have to recognize, on the other hand, that we are to labour to spread the gift of faith itself, that charity is *congregativus*, not *disgregativus*, that if we need the world to integrate ourselves, the gift we bear so unworthily within us is needed, in the designs of God, how much more urgently, to integrate the world, and to fulfil the divine purpose, the building up of the spiritual in the temporal, the establishment of the city of God.

Have we not then to make ourselves one with our environment, even when that environment is something that must be radically altered if christianity is to flourish—rather, precisely because it needs to be radically altered if christianity is to flourish, for we ourselves can and ought to

[4] Gwendolen Plunket Greene: *The Prophet Child*, p. 120.

be active in the work of alteration? Have we not to "reverence the souls of men"; to set aside unequivocally all thought of "pharisaic isolation"? We must of course be clear as to what we mean by becoming one with our environment; the christian, as M. Maritain puts it, cannot give his soul to the world: it is essential to keep independence of thought, to create it indeed if it is not present, to reject the temptation of coming gradually to acquiesce in what we know to be evil; for we cannot placidly allow ourselves to become accomplices in an evil thing, to take part in enterprises which are contrary to the law of God and the nature of man. The policy of integration does not mean this. But it does mean that we shall in the first place try rationally to separate the good from the evil in the civilization in which we live; that we shall then fight the evil, making ourselves one with what is good; that we shall not separate ourselves from, but on the contrary unite ourselves with, society as a whole; knowing that while we can expect the fullness of realization of our "somewhat of possibility" only in and through that society, we have towards it a duty to perform, an influence to make operative, and that this task can only be accomplished through the direct contacts, the sympathy, the intrinsic unity, which come of a common life.

The integrationist policy has an especial application in the sphere of philosophy. "Any nation" wrote Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch in the preface to his lectures on the *Art of Writing,* "any nation that potters with any glory of its past as a thing dead and done for, is to that extent renegade. If that be granted, not all our pride in Shakespeare can excuse the relaxation of an effort—however vain and hopeless—to better him, or some part of him. If, with all our native exemplars to give us courage, we persist in trying to write well, we can easily resign to other nations all the secondary fame to be picked up by commentators." Philosophy, certainly, is a science, literature an art; metaphysical principles as such are immutable. But

metaphysics may develop as dogma is said to develop: through a deeper insight into principles, a wider application of them to the changing problems of the world. Have philosophers within the Church been too long content with the secondary (and domestic) fame of being commentators, of pottering exclusively with a glory of the past, precisely as a thing of the past? For let us make no mistake, scholasticism, in the only true sense of the word, is a thing of the past: scholasticism, if it can be defined at all, means the use of a common technical language in discussing common problems from a more or less common point of view; it says nothing of principles, of solutions to the problems, for diametrically opposed solutions are enclosed within the various systems comprised by the term; and the language is, to the ears of the contemporary world, dead and unintelligible; many of the problems, when we have excepted those great questions which always have perplexed and always will perplex the mind of man, are equally dead and unintelligible; the point of view, the angle of approach, has changed. We read in the *Siècle de Louis XIV* of *un nommé Voët et un nommé Stockius,* that they were professors of the *galimatias scolastique*: the language of scholasticism had even then become jargon, divorced from and alien to the temper of the contemporary mind. No particular philosophical system, historically dating from the scholastic period, need necessarily be dead and done for. Metaphysical truth is outside the categories of space and time, and a metaphysical theory is living if it influences men's lives, dead only in so far as it fails to do so, in so far as it is mummified in the historical cerements of a past age, shut off from contemporary applications or deprived of the light thrown from other sources upon common problems. To treat a scholastic system as something which has meaning for modern problems, and to free it therefore from the accidentals of language and treatment which confine it to one particular age or habit of mind, is to treat it as living; to hold it buried in the accidentals of history is to

make it a dead relic of the past. And to regard thomism, in particular, as a closed system, complete and perfect, is surely to be renegade to the spirit of thomism itself—indeed, ought we not to see here " an instinct which is of the world, an instinct of earthly collectivity, a fortress built by the hand of man "?—for thomism shares in that movement it attributes to all beings save One : the movement towards fuller and fuller completion, until, in its own case, there is no phenomenon, no problem, no sphere of life or aspect of reality, relevant to philosophy or theology, in the successive ages of a changing world, with which it does not concern itself and of which it does not attempt to offer an explanation.

The thomist must " go into the world, speak to the world ". But he cannot go into the world of thought without trying to understand its idiom; he cannot speak to the world if he speaks in an alien tongue. His endeavour then must necessarily be so to assimilate thomism itself that it lives in him independent of a particular terminology, independent even of a particular historical method of approach, capable of concerning itself with the problems of contemporary life; it must also be so to assimilate what is of truth in the current thought of the world that his own mind may become integrated in and through it, and he himself be in a position to contribute what he may to its advance.[5]

A writer in *Blackfriars*, pointing out that thomism cannot be simply the concern of " the professional philosopher as a system to be studied, it should be made a working personal philosophy of life for all " and asking how this is to be achieved, mentions the experiment of the Aquinas Society at Leicester as suggesting a " way which deserves to be widely imitated ". The idea of the Society was explained in its first *Report* :

[5] *Nous ne sommes pas seuls en possession de la vérité,* said Cardinal Mercier, *et la vérité que nous possédons n'est pas la vérité entière.*

"Its inspiration, obviously, was partly found in the London Aquinas Society and similar groups, but from the first we were conscious of a special aim which, as the year passed, became more articulate. The list of lectures appears, as a whole, not to have much to do with St Thomas Aquinas. But they are something more than a haphazard group. It has been our policy to discuss subjects as expressions of, or factors in, a 'world-view', the 'world-view' of which the philosophy of St Thomas is the framework. In other words, our task has been, not the academic one of the study of technical philosophy, but the much more hazardous one of the presenting of a living philosophy. . . . The experiment revealed over and over again that 'men's differences are ultimately theological'. No 'world-view' can stop short at a philosophy; it must surrender to a theology."

"Were such groups formed throughout the country," the writer concludes, "the results might well be tremendous. The crying need is for a strong nucleus of laymen who do not merely 'know' scraps of thomism, but who think thomistically and are accustomed to apply it to the changes and chances of life."[6]

To work for the development of a living thomism in the world at large is of the essence of the integrationist policy.

What of that policy in relation to sociology? The main lines of its programme were sketched by M. Maritain in his *Humanisme Intégral.*

The christian has a temporal mission; a duty to perform in the world and for the world: not merely to save his soul, not merely to save the souls of others if the phrase be taken to mean an exclusive pre-occupation with spiritual as divorced from temporal affairs; but to save in the sense of helping and serving to perfect and fulfil his own and other personalities in accordance with the christian pattern. We cannot say that the humanist ideal is superfluous or irrele-

[6] Cf. "Extracts and Comments", *Blackfriars,* April, 1936.

vant, a luxury. We cannot so separate eternal and temporal as to achieve perfection in the one by alienating ourselves wholly from the other; for we become saints only by living one kind of human life rather than another, we can help humanity to holiness only by helping it to lead, or at least to desire to lead, one kind of life rather than another. Sanctity is not patient of departmentalization; if religion is not life it is not religion. Sanctity and subhumanity, to bring the issue to these more immediate applications, are incompatible. Our civilization has led and is more and more definitely leading to subhumanity. It is for the christian, then, to work for the establishment of the ideals of a christian humanism, for the recovery of men's "original grandeur"; to preach christianity otherwise is ultimately to beat the air with wings. "A new age of christian culture will no doubt understand better than heretofore . . . the ultimate importance of giving the real, the substantial, precedence in every sphere over the apparent and decorative—the really and substantially christian over the apparently and decoratively christian. It will understand moreover that it is useless to affirm the dignity and the vocation of the human person without working to transform the conditions which oppress the person, without ensuring that he may be able worthily to eat his bread."[7]

How are we to work for the establishment of a christian humanism, a christendom? The first thing obviously is to be clear as to what this christendom ought to be; the second, to see what may be done, both remotely and proximately, to bring it about.

The first problem is not so simple as it might at first sight seem. There is no pattern to which we can point, as to something which merely demands to be revived. We cannot revive the Holy Roman Empire. As sanctity differs in manner in different historical conditions, so we may suppose that the christian's awareness of his temporal function to-day "calls for a new type of holiness, which one might

[7] Maritain: *Humanisme Intégral*, p. 104.

characterize primarily as a holiness and a sanctification of the secular life" and that the new type of christendom to which the exigencies of to-day would seem to point is a christendom not *sacrale* but *profane*, a civilization which is no longer simply an instrument of the spiritual but is an end in its own order (*finis ultimus secundum quid*).[8] The old bad theory of the Two Ways—contemplation, perfection, for the cloister, the bare minimum observance of commandments for the world (the state of the imperfect)—this invalid distinction, "so widespread, it would seem, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries", must receive practical refutation: "profane will no longer be opposed to sacred as impure to pure"; for the Gospel principle—the sanctification of the profane, the penetration of grace into the depths of the world of nature—will reach a further step in its gradual manifestation and realization.

"Ought we to conceive of a new christendom . . . as essentially, specifically different from that of the Middle Ages, while expressing in itself (analogously) the same principles? We reply, Yes. . . . For not only do we recognize the radical irreversibility of the movement of history (in contrast to the pagan concept of the eternal return or recurrence), but further we hold that this process is the stage of a divine and human drama of which visible events are but the symbols and that humanity, carried on by this irresistible movement, passes through essentially different historical climates which create specifically different conditions of realization for the principles of civilization." "An experience which has been completely lived out (*trop faite*) cannot be begun anew." Further, "it is impossible to conceive that the sufferings and experiences of the modern age have been in vain. That age . . . has sought for the rehabilitation of the creature; it has sought it in wrong directions, but we ought to recognize and salvage the truths which lie hidden there captive." "It would be to go

[8] *ibid.* p. 134.

against God himself, to fight against his supreme governance of history, if we were to try to immobilize in one univocal pattern, in a pattern of the past, the ideal of a culture worthy of being the aim of our activity."[9]

The aim of christian action will be, not to re-create an old, dead culture, but to create a new and living culture. So the christian position is *intégraliste* and progressive: "the task which confronts the christian is the task of saving the humanist truths which four centuries of anthropocentric humanism have disfigured, of saving them at the very moment when culture is decaying and when these truths, together with the errors which distort and oppress them, are threatened with dissolution".

The "armoury of ideas" for this task is to be found in St Thomas. "As the augustinian theology of grace and liberty dominates the Middle Ages, and the theologies of Calvin and Molina dominate modern times, so, in our view, will the theology of St Thomas dominate a new christendom." For St Thomas is not scholasticism, nor is thomism essentially bound up with scholasticism; and while the latter, being essentially a particular mode of expression, of approaching problems, belongs to a "dead past" and we cannot seek to revive it, thomism is in essence bound to no particular type of expression or method, but on the contrary carries with it St Thomas's ability to "discern, in the heart of established order and œcumenical catholic tradition, the strongest forces of life, of revolution, of renewal", and can, as he did, "salvage and assimilate into the catholicity of a doctrine perfectly pure and free, all the truths, despising no one of them, towards which the thought of paganism in its darkness and the discordant systems of philosophers were striving".[10]

For this is one of the main planks of the integrationist platform. If we are to establish the pattern of a new christendom it must be by way first of criticism of our

[9] *op. cit.* pp. 152-3. [10] *op. cit.* pp. 81, 84, 222-3.

world as we know it, but secondly, constructively, by way of assimilating into christian society all the good our civilization has achieved.

"Christian humanism, integral humanism, can embrace everything because it knows that God has no contrary and that everything is irresistibly carried forward by the movement of the divine governance. It will not cast out into the exterior darkness that which in the human heritage is the fruit of heresy and schism, of errors of heart and mind: *oportet haereses esse.* In the system of christian humanism there is no place for the errors of Luther or Voltaire; but there is a place for Luther and Voltaire inasmuch as, in spite of those errors. they contributed to human history certain enrichments which belong to Christ as does everything of value in mankind."[11]

The building up of the new christendom, then, will not be viewed as a mere rehabilitation of the traditional values of catholics and a repudiation of all other achievements: it will consist in the reassessing and criticism of the former, the adoption and where necessary the christianizing of the latter. "The radical fault of anthropocentric humanism was that it was anthropocentric, not that it was humanism."[12]

"The christian world is one thing, christianity quite another." Christianity is divine and indefectible; the christian world is all too human and frail. Why the deep resentment against the christian world of which there is so striking a recrudescence in our day? "Above all, through the fault of a christian world unfaithful to its principles"; and the tragedy is that this resentment fails to make the fundamental distinction, and its hatred of the behaviour of christians becomes also a hatred of christianity and Christ. "The christian world of to-day has failed in its duty . . . in general, it has enclosed divine truth and life within a limited section of its existence—in the sphere of religious observance and, at any rate among better

[11] *op. cit.* p. 102. [12] *op. cit.* p. 35.

christians, in the affairs of the inner life. Social, political, economic life, these it has abandoned to their own carnal law, withdrawn from the light of Christ. Marx for example 'is right when he declares that a capitalist society is an anarchical society wherein life is defined exclusively as a gamble in private interests. Nothing is more contrary to the spirit of christianity.'[13] Hence the resentment against those who have not been able to realize the truth they bore, a resentment which rebounds on to that very truth itself."[14]

The refusal to acknowledge that there can be anything to criticize in catholic society—a refusal due, it would seem, to a sort of collective inferiority complex, fruit perhaps of the centuries of persecution and oppression—is one of the causes both of the hatred of catholicism and of secession from the Church (" The saints had for three centuries been calling in vain for the reform of the Church when the tempest of lutheranism broke "[15]); it is also perhaps one of the greatest practical obstacles to the reunion of christians and as such is of first importance in the present context, the formation of a new christendom.

There is indeed a very real danger that in turning all the armoury of our criticism against the evils of the contemporary anti-christian world of marxist-communism we may fail to recognize and acknowledge fully the evils of our own society and the extent to which they are leading us to subhumanity and to the dethronement alike of human and of christian values. A centralized control, a power uneasily divided between oligarchy and quasi-independent bureaucracy, encroaches more and more upon the exercise of individual liberty while at the same time allowing the despotism of money to enslave and degrade mankind. There is always a danger that human government will be coercive of the wrong things. We in our democratic state are in danger of becoming enslaved to a tyranny as inhuman in its way as that of any eastern

[13] Berdyaev. [14] *op. cit.* pp. 49-52.
[15] Maritain: *op. cit.* p. 50.

despot. This is true of its direct bureaucratic activities; far truer of other activities which it indirectly allows. The Big Business Man can still be as powerful and autocratic as a Pharaoh; but while the Pharaoh's subjects often regarded him, wrongly, as some sort of god, the B.B.M.'s employees often regard him, rightly, as some sort of devil. On the other hand we have to reckon nowadays with a dangerous concentration, and despotic misuse, of power on the part of the Trades Union "bosses". The lust for power and for profit, which governments have to constrain and which our own society has so often failed to constrain, can all too easily turn a race of theoretically free men into a race of submen, of servile cogs in an inhuman machine.

Yet here as elsewhere we must be faithful to the integrationist principle; we must not allow ourselves the overemphasis of so many reformers and throw away baby with bath-water. Christianity to-day calls for an "industrial revolution" of a new kind. But we shall harm the cause of christianity if we are merely destructive, if we exaggerate. Many will fight against the establishment of a christian order because they find its advocates fighting under the banners of Erewhon or Rousseau and they have no desire themselves to return to Nature. But it is not a question merely of policy. To advocate the destruction of all machinery, for instance, is to advocate what would lead to immense hardship and suffering; more, it is to advocate the surrender of our so hardly won conquest of our material environment; more radically still, it is the abdication of a human faculty and vocation. "The truth is," M. Maritain writes, "that it is not the business of science to rule our lives, but of wisdom. The supreme task of civilization is in the realm not of transitive but of immanent activity; if we are really to make machinery, industry, science, subservient to men, we must make them subservient to an ethic of personality, an ethic of love and liberty. It would be a grave error to repudiate machinery or industry or science, which

are in themselves good, and which we ought on the contrary to utilize for the achieving of an economic of plenty. But we must choose between a civilization which is essentially industrial and a civilization which is essentially human and for which industry is but an instrument and therefore subject to laws other than its own."[16]

The ingenuity which has created the machine age could be used to create a better, a christian machine age. A right criterion, a right direction of invention and enterprise, these are what is needed; a positive, not a negative programme. The safeguarding and perfecting of the creative faculty in man, in *every* man, is the christian criterion; and with this, machinery as such is not necessarily incompatible. It can increase, not destroy, creativity. The town-building which is, or rather would be, possible with the aid of rationalized machinery implies greater creativity than the building of the agglomerate of huts which is possible without it. (We should not scorn the possibilities of urban civilization simply because our towns are in fact so frightful, because the word "urban" has sunk to such ignominy that we have to add an *e* to make it polite.) It is essential, and it is possible, to have a machinery which both in the making and in the use of it does not imply subhuman service from man, which does not usurp what the hand can better do and ought to do, which helps the hand to do what without it it could not. At present, man is still to a great extent being made to do the dirty work of the machine; instead of this the machine should be made to do the dirty work of man.

In the same way the vast resources of power which are now at our disposal should be used not to destroy but to safeguard or to re-create the ideals of small ownership and enterprise. A society in which a man cannot call his house or his work his own is on the way to becoming a society in which a man cannot call his soul his own.

[16] *op. cit.* pp. 208-9.

"St Thomas teaches, as we know, that on the one hand, primarily in view of the exigencies of the human personality considered as working on and elaborating material and subjecting it to the forms of reason, the appropriation of goods should be private, since otherwise labour would be ill exercised; but on the other hand, in view of the primary destination of material goods to the benefitting of the human race, and the need each person has of these means in order to direct his life towards his last end, the use of goods privately possessed should serve the common good of all. . . . This second aspect was completely lost sight of in the epoch of liberalist individualism." The socialist or communist reaction, however, is no remedy to this neglect, for again, like most revolutionary doctrines, it tries to redeem one aspect of the truth by suppressing the other. "Precisely in order to extend to each individual in suitable form the advantages and guarantees with which private property endows the personality, it is not a form of state-socialism or communism but, in our view, a form of partnership that property should take in the sphere of industrialism, so that joint ownership should replace as far as possible the wage system, and the human person should be compensated for the conditions imposed by machinery by the intellectual participation of labour in the birth and direction of enterprise."[17]

The working-out of this idea cannot be followed here. But the basic principle may again be recalled: we should not strive to re-create a dead past. In the economics of industry, "the very interests of the personality demand a certain collectivization of ownership. . . . The more enterprise is perfected by machinery, rationalization and the means of financial mobility, the more accentuated becomes this tendency to collectivism." On the other hand, rural economy, "under modern forms, and utilizing the advantages of machinery and co-operation, would tend towards a renewal and revivifying of family economy and family

[17] Maritain: *op. cit.* pp. 198, 200.

ownership; and it is this rural economy, more fundamental than industry, which should first be assured."[18]

Again, the distribution of enterprise and ownership should be accompanied by a parallel distribution of political responsibility. Bureaucracy, unless it is opposed, will complete the de-humanization which the economic regime, basking in the *laissez-faire* atmosphere of liberal-democracy, so successfully began. Again a positive programme is essential. And of this, one element must surely be a large measure of devolution. How can a village, let alone a district, hold up its head when its life, its *mores*, its housing and even its carousing, are controlled from Whitehall?

Education, for example, has certainly lost far more than it has gained by centralization. The contemplation natural to the peasant is practically a thing of the past; in its stead the child is given a mass of material information, some of which may enable the man to read the popular press, do accounts, and know the geographical position of Birmingham and Blackpool. We are, in other words, doing our best to produce the kind of public which falls an easy prey to the commercialism, sensationalism and vulgar thought-surrogates supplied by the popular press or radio. Once again we should not advocate the abandonment of education because, like machinery, it would seem so far to have proved almost more of a curse than a blessing, but we ought surely to be urgent in working for its improvement, for the creation of an order in which the child's faculty of vision shall be not killed but perfected, the educational environment beautiful instead of ugly, its technique not mechanical but personal, a matter not of arid regimentation but of fertile individual care and initiative.

Whatever form of government may be in question, it is to the establishment of democracy in the true sense of the word that the new christendom must aim, a *démocratie personnaliste*, compatible indeed with " organic differentiations and inequalities ", yet preserving as first condition of

[18] Maritain: *op. cit.* p. 178.

its structure the dignity and autonomy of the person. Then law " would find once again its moral function, the function of *pedagogue of freedom*, which it has all but lost in the liberalist state "; it would concern itself with " the education of men to the end that they might cease at last to be under the law, for they would then do of themselves, voluntarily and freely, what the law prescribes—a thing that happens only to the wise."[19]

In all these different parts of the integrationist programme the same fundamental ideas are dominant. The important thing, the thing which must always be put first and in the light of which other considerations must be weighed, is the human personality. We are threatened with the dissolution of our world because we have done violence to personality, whether in the name of commercial efficiency or in the name of state absolutism, or simply through the haphazard growth to gigantic proportions of bureaucracy. There are more important things than political or economic efficiency, and they must be put first. But this must be done, not by destroying everything else, but by perfecting everything else; not by jettisoning our heritage, the good with the bad, but by trying so to alter it that, by serving instead of betraying the first things, it may itself become wholly good. A bold programme, perhaps dangerous; yet we are bound to attempt it if we would not run counter to the basic thomist principle by abandoning the actual or potential achievements of our world and thereby destroying some part of human existence. And we should neither fight shy of attempting it, nor despair of success, if we put our trust, as we ought, in him who makes all things new.

[19] Maritain: *op. cit.* p. 196.

CHAPTER 8

Politics and Personalism

"AMONG POLITICIANS" said Whichcote, the Cambridge Platonist, "the esteem of religion is profitable, the principles of it are troublesome."[1] Have the principles of it any business there at all? The Middle Ages were emphatic and—with the exception of Ockham and Marsiglio of Padua—unanimous in their answer. The aristotelean notion of political society as condition of the good life, based upon the principle that man is a social animal, had been reinforced and transfigured by the christian principle of membership of Christ's Mystical Body, and the consequent portrayal by Augustine of the city of God—a society at once natural and supernaturalized. This in turn had given rise to the doctrine of the primacy of the spiritual: the end of man being first beatitude in the next life and secondly beatitude in this, the principles according to which the primary object was to be achieved were regarded as superior to and regulative of the principles which concerned the secondary. Thus it might be expedient economically for a king to levy a tax or wage a war, but such expediency would have to be forgone if the spiritual authority declared his projects ethically wrong, irreconcilable with the spirit of Christ. Such was the theory.[2] In

[1] Quoted in W. R. Inge: *Platonist Tradition*, p. 53.

[2] Pollock, in his *History of the Science of Politics*, is strangely unfair in his summary of the political thought of the Middle Ages. "We must say" he writes, "of all the medieval writers on politics . . . that they really have no theory of the State. Their aim is to maintain the cause of the Papacy or of the Emperor as the case may be." Disinterested study of politics was a thing "beyond them". That the claims of Pope and Emperor should be discussed follows from the very notion of the primacy of the spiritual, and the clashes between the two powers which in

practice, as A. D. Lindsay for example pointed out in his *Christianity and Economics*, by the time of the Reformation the subordination had to a great extent ceased to exist.

Ethical principles continued to be preached from the pulpit; the laity in practice ignored them. After the Reformation the split widened. Luther violently attacked social evils, but the weapons he used were those of the medieval canonists which he himself in his contempt for learning and reason denounced with equal violence. And he had no positive programme to suggest, for indeed his basic principle was that to externalize religion in rules of conduct was to degrade it.[3] Of Calvin the same is not true—"the principle upon which the collectivism of Geneva rested may be described as that of the omnicompetent Church"[4]—but calvinism developed individualistically in spite of Calvin; and the theory that thrifty business was virtuous conduct developed into the puritan doctrine of the sanctity of wealth. Thus the divorce of religion from life was completed either on the explicit ground that the former had nothing to do with the latter, or because religion itself was made to give its blessing to the get-rich-quick policy of commerce.

The Reformation, in this as in other matters, was not a violent break with tradition, forced upon a society in spirit thoroughly christian; it was the logical conclusion of a settled tendency. That conclusion has its classical formulation in the words of Tawney: society ceases to be an organism, a communion of classes with varying interests, united by mutual obligations arising from their relations to a common end (and by the recognition of common

[3] Cf. Tawney: *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 100.

[4] Tawney, *op. cit.* p. 124.

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practice must follow. But there is, in the writings of St Thomas, an outline of a complete political theory, of which such discussion is but a part, and which incidentally is one of the evidences of his realist attitude towards the whole question.

supra-political and supra-economic criteria and authority), and becomes instead a joint-stock company, in which the "liabilities of the share-holders are strictly limited"[5].

The functional idea of society had collapsed; the way was open to *laissez-faire* in economics and to liberalist individualism in politics. The philosophical spokesman of the joint-stock company was Locke. But the divorce of politics from ethics had taken place much earlier. A fundamental principle in Machiavelli, it appears in England in the *Leviathan*. The premises upon which Hobbes based his political theory are the principles, first, of psychological hedonism: pleasure is the only good, and men in fact always pursue it; and secondly, of egoism: of the voluntary acts of every man the object is some good to himself. Political society is by convention established solely for the utility of individuals. By nature solitary, man in the natural state is always at war with the world, and life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". It is only when egoism recognizes the need of society for the sake of peace and commodious living and the avoidance of an untimely death that reason suggests the renouncing of natural rights by a mutual agreement, the observance of which is a rule of reason or law of nature. This surrender of rights is, with the exception of the right of self-preservation, absolute; the original compact of union is made between the citizens, not between the subjects and their ruler. To seek peace, then, is the first law of nature (as Hobbes used the term); from this follows a second: that men must be ready, in pursuit of this end, to lay down their rights to all things if other men will do likewise, and from this again follows the third: that men must perform their covenants made. Here Hobbes allows of no condition: the law is absolute, and with some sleight of hand he introduces the word "ought", quite illegitimately. Unjust and just, wrong and right (in this order—the theological pessimism of Luther is paralleled in the ethical pessimism of Hobbes),

[5] *op. cit.* p. 189.

now have meaning, for injustice is the infringement of a covenant once made. The king, then, can do no wrong (Hobbes here agreeing with the upholders of the theory of divine right) for he has made no covenant; he cannot forfeit his power; his laws may not be disobeyed simply because the subject thinks them unjust.

To these theorizings the Revolution offered a Johnsonian refutation. It remained to formulate a justification of the triumph of parliamentarianism, to abolish the absolutism of the king, and to give full scope to individualism. To this task Locke addressed himself. He retained the social contract theory, but he changed its nature. By it the individuals cede the anarchic powers of the state of nature into the hands not of the king but of the community; they keep their individual liberty, and the State engages itself by a constitutional pact to respect and maintain them. There is no thought of a common end of society. Men merely seek in it the security necessary for the attainment of their own individual ends. Thus, in place of the absolutism of the sovereign of Hobbes, Locke substitutes, as Viallatoux remarks[6] the absolutism of the individual; and, in place of the principle of functional responsibility, the principle of non-interference on the part of the State and of individual irresponsibility on the part of the citizen.

"It was the fall of the Papacy in England that founded the Whig aristocracy", wrote Disraeli in *Coningsby*; the kingship, made economically impotent after the seventeenth century, became successively weaker; the royal prerogative "unfortunately for the rights and liberties and social welfare of the people has, since 1688, been more or less oppressed"; the Church, resigned to its new position of adjunct to the gentry and become stagnant, exercised no control whatever. The majority rule, which Locke had recognized as a practical necessity for the working of democracy, was in fact used as an electioneering slogan for the purpose of oligarchy. The people were cheated into the

[6] *Philosophie Economique,* ch. II.

1832 Reform (small wonder there was nearly a revolution when they discovered how they had been tricked); the power passed exclusively into the hands of a single class. The Tory rule had not been particularly intelligent; it had at least been kind. The Whig regime was both unintelligent and spiteful. Significantly, it regarded poverty as a crime; the workhouse test was made as humiliating as possible. The negro slavery agitation was largely humbug, an electioneering device;[7] nothing was done to remedy slavery in England itself. Class warfare was inevitable, the terrible anomaly of the Two Nations.

This political issue, combined with the economic evils of industrial and financial capitalism, produced a reaction in political theory, the renewal of absolutism. Democracy has failed, it was claimed; totalitarianism must be tried as a better alternative. The theory of the absolute State has often enough been formulated, from the *Republic* onwards. Spencer's organism-theory—the individual occupying the position of a cell in a physical organism—should logically leave no scope for individual liberty or personality; Hegel regarded political society as an aspect of the Absolute evolving towards its own perfection and therefore as having as its one end its own subsistence; modern forms of totalitarianism tend to deny all the natural rights of individuals and to assert the complete transcendence of the interests of the State.

As with other philosophical alternatives, thomism contrives to occupy, between individualism and totalitarianism, a middle position by way not of eclecticism but of synthesis. When considering ethical theories, we found that the philosophy of St Thomas had something in common with them all; here similarly, it is by a fusion of opposing elements that its synthesis is achieved.

Man is by nature a social animal; this is the basic principle of the thomist theory. Political society therefore is indicated by nature not only as a means of security and

[7] Using the sincerity of men like Wilberforce as an instrument.

material welfare but also as an indispensable means to the positive attainment of the best life. The man who lives in isolation, as Aristotle remarked, is either subhuman or superhuman. If then to live in society is demanded by the end of human nature, it is a matter of moral obligation, for physical necessity with regard to the achievement of the natural end becomes in man an ethical imperative. The theory of a free contract therefore is not *in se* acceptable. What is the acceptable element in it? Simply this, that while political society in general is of natural law, the particular form which this or that society takes can theoretically[8] be a matter of agreement, and will indeed necessarily differ according to divergent racial temperaments and characteristics—a fact sometimes overlooked by empire-builders.

Secondly, if the social life is a necessary condition of the good life, it follows, as we have seen, that in some respects the society exists for the sake of the individual. But not in all respects. The common good, according to Aristotle and St Thomas, is " more divine " than the particular good of each individual inasmuch as the good of the whole takes precedence over that of the part. Aristotle's hylomorphism is here applied: the individuals are in one respect the materials of the State, as bricks are of a house, and the end of the community is therefore greater than the sum of the ends of its parts, as that of the house is greater than the sum of the ends of the bricks.

It is a man's duty therefore to act for the common good, the building up of a good social life—a good city, let us say, harmoniously functioning as an organism, each part perfect in its proper function. Each part perfect: in theory the common good includes all individual goods. In practice it is otherwise, for men do not act consistently according to reason, and a state of tension inevitably results which

[8] Historically, no political society has ever been founded by social contract with the exception of the U.S.A. and, according to Valton, the republic of Venice—the exceptions which prove the rule.

makes it necessary to delimit the rights and make plain the duties of citizen and State. Moreover, the common good is not a fixed thing; it varies according to circumstance, and in time of crisis the good of the individual must be sacrificed for the preservation of the whole society.

But men are not merely parts of a whole, cogs in a machine. They are self-subsistent, rational. They have personality, and a capacity for, and natural orientation towards, the contemplation of the truth. As persons they are not parts of a whole, but *sui juris*—they stand alone; as contemplative they have a perfection to achieve which is personal to themselves. And it is in the achieving of this perfection that the good life principally lies. Society then in its turn has a twofold obligation: it cannot interfere with this private and personal end; it must on the contrary foster it by providing the proper material setting for it. The starving man cannot contemplate; nor can the man who is over-active; contemplation demands a certain degree of wealth and leisure.

And what of sovereignty? It is clear that all cannot govern all—the power must be vested in somebody. *A priori* and in theory, according to St Thomas, monarchy is the most perfect form of government, but he is too realist to leave the matter there. He was not familiar with courts for nothing. In practice, he holds, the regime most likely to succeed is a limited monarchy, for this provides the most efficient check on attempts at abuse of power.

It will be seen that the thomist politic agrees to some extent with all the varying theories of the State. With Spencer it holds that the State is an organism, though it refuses to allow that individuals are no more than cells in the organism: the principle of *functional* society emerges. With Plato's *Republic* and all forms of communism and collectivism it holds that the end of the society is greater than the ends of the individuals who compose it, while refusing to admit that the State is omnicompetent and supreme: the principle of *social ethic* emerges. Even with

Hegel's pantheism it has this affinity, that it views the evolution of the society as a process of divinization—the working out of the divine idea in the material of human relationship —the principle of common striving after the *bonum commune* emerges. With the *Contrat Social* of Rousseau it has this much in common: that while denying the thesis that society is the outcome merely of convention, and the pseudo-mystic deification (political pantheism) of the General Will, it can see in the latter postulate the truth that there *ought* to be a general will, if not in the sense understood by Bosanquet (as a real or higher as opposed to an apparent or lower satisfaction of individual wills—Rousseau was not as subtle as this) at least in the sense of a striving after a common objective more divine than that of the will of each. With Hobbes and Locke it holds that the State must protect and safeguard the citizens' perfection; but it will not narrow the scope of State action to this negative policy—what Bosanquet calls the hindering of hindrances—alone: on the contrary, to the principle of non-interference with the personal end of the individual and the safeguarding of individual rights it adds the positive duty on the part of the State of fostering actively the individual's perfection by assuring him the material environment necessary for achieving it.

The same is true of the contemporary alternatives. Thomism is fundamentally opposed to totalitarianism in its denial of personal end and rights, though at one with its search for unity and a common goal. It is fundamentally opposed to individualism on the grounds of its social irresponsibility, its denial of the supremacy of moral law and of the rights of the society against the individual; but at one with its assertion of the validity of personal ends. It denies totally the omnicompetence of the State; but welcomes any political structure which expresses its two basic principles, of personalism and of social function. On the one hand, it sees society as an organism wherein each member has his function and therefore his duties to the

whole community; duties which, as the *bonum commune* varies—for it will be a very different thing in time of prosperous peace and in time of war or famine—will demand more or less sacrifice and make possible to a greater or less degree the identification of the individual perfection with that of the whole. On the other hand, the citizens are persons, and the society therefore as a whole has the duty of respecting, safeguarding and positively promoting the personal good of each citizen. And as these mutual responsibilities are dictated not by utilitarian agreement but by natural law—the demands of human nature as such—their sanction is a moral sanction: the citizen is morally bound to further the interests of society, the State to further the interests of the person.

The same is true of the relationship of State to State. Thomism cannot accept the international irresponsibility of a nationalism which admits no law above that of its own interest; nor the anti-national irresponsibility of cosmopolitanism, which refuses to regard the nation as a unit at all. There must be international relations of States as there are social relationships of individuals, and for similar reasons; these relationships in their turn must conform to ethical criteria.

To this philosophical conception of society christianity brings clarification and profundity. The christian law of justice goes far beyond the natural law of justice: the supernatural end of man enlarges the ambit of private endeavour, imposes on the State a far greater degree of non-interference, and at the same time, by imposing on it the duty of subserving a supernatural end, providing material scope for the living of the supernatural life, enlarges its duties and responsibilities. The doctrine of the Mystical Body gives new and profound meaning to the aristotelean principle that the common good is more divine than the particular; the end now envisaged is that of a society working not merely for the terrestrial beatitude of individuals and the advancement of society as a whole, but

for the celestial good of all and the divinization, the "supernaturalized civilization", of the whole.

It is easy to think of the regulating hand of theology in politics in terms of sinister ecclesiastics lurking lugubriously behind the curtains of medieval thrones; history affords some excuse for such a view; but it should not blind us to the theoretic truth implicit in Plato's picture of the philosopher-king: that a science whose concern is with a single aspect of life is of itself insufficient to regulate actions which affect the whole of life. The evil of a disgregate life is the inevitable result of a lack of unity of thought; and as a functional political structure postulates hierarchy, and a functional internationalism demands unity of aim, so there must first be a contemplative coherence, a clear apprehension of the end to be achieved and of the duties of individuals and of society in bringing it about. To make politics supreme is to sacrifice the whole man for the sake of an abstraction; to divorce politics from ethics is to throw man into chaos and disruption.

The two great evils which threaten human society to-day are, on the one hand a progressive subhumanization, on the other hand, sudden and perhaps total destruction through nuclear warfare. The absolutist State forces subhumanity upon its subjects by treating them as cogs in the political machine; the liberalist State, by developing into a plutocratic oligarchy or an impersonal and anti-personalist bureaucracy, brings about the same result in a more underhand fashion. Subhumanity will not be remedied by partial expedients, any more than international chaos will be cured simply by talking of peace.

We are suffering from a double disorder: political leadership is both too centralized and too localized. "In former times," writes Professor Ferrero, "the world was divided into many independent sections. Empires might fall to rack and ruin in the Far East without the Mediterranean area being aware of it; the Mediterranean area might sink into anarchy without unduly upsetting distant Asia. Nowa-

days, the world lives a single co-ordinated life despite diversity of races and climates, religions and customs. 'The internal happenings of other countries are no concern of ours', diplomats liked to say. This formula might have had value behind the closed doors of chancelleries; dragged out into the open air of reality, it has none. On the contrary, it could be said that nothing concerns every people more than do the political crises and *coups d'état* and revolutions which are capable of shaking the foundations of the social order in one part or another of the earth. Isolated destinies no longer exist among the nations."[9] The solidarity of the world is a fact from which we cannot escape if we could. And we ought not to want to escape from it, for to the christian it expresses a realization of the ideal of the human family. But our trouble is that we have had a material unity brought about for us, and we are not prepared to use it properly, to make it also a formal unity. "The unification of the world, accomplished by colonization, by exploration, by emigration, by universal religions, by wars, by commerce, diplomacy, railroads and telegraphic communication must lead to a civilization of a universal character. A single body cannot go on living under the guidance of several discordant and inimical consciences. The world body, which is now almost a physical entity, requires a single conscience in which there will be room for all that is best of the civilizations already existing to reside in harmony: christian morality, occidental industry and science, the ancient wisdom of the east, the flower of European and Asiatic art."[10] This unity of conscience is precisely what we lack. We have therefore all the dangers of solidarity and few of its blessings. When we have the opportunity to secure world unity and peace we cannot use it, because politicians continue to look after the "vital interests" of their own nations to the detriment of the really vital interests of others. The element of centraliza-

[9] *The Unity of the World* (Eng. trans.), p. 31.

[10] Ferrero, *op. cit.* p. 21.

tion necessary to preserve our world is the one thing we cannot achieve in a world suffering from over-centralization, because we have not yet learnt the lesson that nationalism, implying as it does the impossibility of establishing a single conscience, is the curse of the world.

On the other hand, at home we find ourselves the victims of the opposite evil. It is part of the perfection of every man that he should be able to rule his own roost. In fact, we find the State encroaching more and more upon the autonomy of the individual and the family. In England, our private lives are increasingly at the mercy of Whitehall; we find ourselves more and more marshalled like children and subjected to a dragooning which is a practical denial of the rights of the person, and will lead to a state of affairs in which the citizen becomes incapable of exercising his citizenship, for if a faculty is robbed long enough of its function it becomes atrophied.

"Man has a spiritual and immortal soul. He is a person, marvellously endowed by his Creator with gifts of body and mind. He is a true 'microcosm' as the ancients said, a world in miniature, with a value far surpassing that of the vast inanimate cosmos. God alone is his last end, in this life and the next. By sanctifying grace he is raised to the dignity of a son of God and incorporated into the kingdom of God in the Mystical Body of Christ. In consequence he has been endowed by God with many and varied prerogatives: the right to live, to bodily integrity, to the necessary means of existence, the right to tend towards his ultimate goal in the path marked out for him by God; the right of association and the right to possess and use property. . . . God has likewise destined man for civil society according to the dictates of his very nature. In the plan of the Creator, society is a natural means which man can and must use to reach his destined end. Society is for man and not *vice versa*. This must not be understood in the sense of liberalistic individualism, which subordinates

society to the selfish use of the individual; but only in the sense that by means of an organic union with society and by mutual collaboration the attainment of earthly happiness is placed within the reach of all. In a further sense, it is society which affords the opportunities for the development of all the individual and social gifts bestowed on human nature. These gifts have a value surpassing the immediate interests of the moment, for in society they reflect the divine perfection, which would not be true were man to live alone. But on final analysis, even in this latter function, society is made for man, that he may recognize this reflection of God's perfection, and refer it in praise and adoration to the Creator. Only man, the human person, and not society in any form, is endowed with reason and a morally free will."[11]

We in this country have much to be thankful for. We have not yet reached the stage at which the State is deified; we do not have to conform our thoughts, or even our words, to the political gospel of our leaders; better a bureaucracy than a dictatorship. But we should be on our guard. We have muddled through many things; we have muddled into our present system; we may, if we are not careful, find that we have muddled into something approaching an equivalent totalitarianism. We have to restore the sense of power to the individual. And our only way of doing so is to check the centralization which is oppressing our freedom, and to embark on the opposite policy of devolution. It may be efficient to have everything regulated from Whitehall, but it is inhuman and is therefore bad ethics. And a political system, however efficient, cannot be good if it clashes with ethics. We have to work for the restoration of local autonomy. There are things in which centralized control is necessary and beneficent; but there is a vast multitude of things in which it is unnecessary, and derogatory to human freedom and responsibility. Let us have centralized control;

[11] *Divini Redemptoris,* Secs. 27, 29.

but let us have as our first concern, in Disraeli's words, "that parochial polity of the country which secures to every labourer a home," and, he might have added, a safeguard and a setting for the increase of his soul.

CHAPTER 9

The Economics of Personality

"IT IS therefore according to the dictates of reason that ultimately all material things should be ordained to man as a person, that through his mediation they should find their way to the Creator. In this wise we can apply to man, the human person, the words of the Apostle of the Gentiles, who writes to the Corinthians on the christian economy of salvation: 'All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. . . .' Just as in the living organism it is impossible to provide for the good of the whole unless each single part and each individual member is given what it needs for the exercise of its proper functions, so it is impossible to care for the social organism and the good of society as a unit unless each single part and each individual member—that is to say, each individual man in the dignity of his human personality—is supplied with all that is necessary for the exercise of his social functions."[1]

The revolt of politics from ethical principles which we have been considering was paralleled by that of economics. But this latter went further. It not only cast off the control of religion and ethics; it also emancipated itself from the control of politics, the service of the common good, an emancipation which arose from the doctrine of *laissez-faire*, the appeal to the principle of non-interference. Human life was thus doubly poisoned: ethics and *a fortiori* religion were relegated to the position of one among many

[1] *Divini Redemptoris*, Secs. 30, 51.

departments of life without connection with the rest: the individualist's pursuit of wealth threw off the shackles of even a material common welfare. Theorists were not wanting to make the world safe for plutocracy.

In philosophy, metaphysics had since the time of Descartes and his immediate scholastic predecessors become more and more discredited, until finally it was scrapped. Descartes had turned man, the psycho-physical unity of St Thomas, into an angel in a machine; his successors scrapped the angel and left the machine. Parallel with the current of thought ran the current of events. The industrial revolution of the nineteenth century was not a revolution but a natural outcome of a process which had been going on for centuries, quickened by the coincidence of a number of mutually interactive influences: the discovery of the New World with its vast potential markets, the growth of banking and credit, the Wars of Succession and the change in colonial policy, the growth of population due to the falling death rate, the impulse of puritanism. The immediate result of the new movement, with its concomitants of renewed and more drastic enclosure of land, depopulation of the rural districts, and change from domestic industry to the factory system, was the emergence of the *entrepreneur*, the central figure of the new regime; value-in-use gave way in importance to exchange-value, as function gave way to the autonomy of money. The change in the structure of society was the result of circumstance, the hurried completion of a century-old trend. This, combined with the current mechanist thought, produced the economic doctrine of *laissez-faire*. Liberalism invented the economic man, reacting mechanically to stimuli according to egoistic-hedonist principles; Adam Smith invented the invisible hand; the physiocrats invented the iron law of wages.

Tawney speaks of Marx as the last of the Schoolmen, because he, like them, held a labour theory of value. But the physiocrats and the positivists had intervened. There is recognition of the "impersonal forces of the market"

and of the automatic functioning of economic law as early as Buridanus and Antonino of Florence; thinkers such as these recognized for example that the market is determined by laws of supply and demand, but they emphasized the fact that such automatic functioning ought to be controlled (as of course it can be, for supply and demand depend on human appetite) by ethical standards. They insisted, that is, that man is a man and not an economic abstraction, and that labour ought to be given a just reward, if necessary above that which the economic forces of themselves would produce. And, as moralists and theologians, it was with the ethical control of economic law that they were first concerned.

Laissez-faire fought hard throughout the nineteenth century to maintain its position. Legislation was for long secured only by tremendous pressure, and even then was piecemeal and grudging. But the theory fell. There should be no need in these days of rationalization and planned economy to protest that the State ought to take action against economic absolutism. But there is every need to protest that pressure is not always brought to bear at the points where it is most needed or on the issues which are most fundamental. If children of four are no longer sold to the slavery of a twelve-hour day, and women no longer draw trucks on all fours in the mines, too many workers remain none the less subhumanized. If their souls are no longer brutalized by gang systems and sweating, they are often asphyxiated by irrational routine.

"A welfare worker asked an operative, 'What are you making?'

"'C 429.'

"'What is C 429?'

"'I don't know.' 'What becomes of C 429 when it leaves you?'

"'I don't know.'

"'How long have you been making C 429?'

" 'Nine years.' "[2]

But, as we have seen, we cannot seek to remedy the sub-humanity of the machine age by scrapping the machine. " The material organization of the world by science and invention," writes Mr Christopher Dawson, " is in no sense to be refused or despised by the catholic tradition, for to the catholic philosopher no less than to the scientist the progressive *rationalization* of matter by the work of scientific intelligence is the natural vocation of the human mind. This must seem a hard saying when we consider that science and discovery, like a second eating of the forbidden fruit of knowledge, have proved a curse rather than a blessing to humanity. But the disease of modern civilization lies neither in science nor in machinery, but in the false philosophy with which they have been associated. At the very moment that man was at last acquiring control over his material environment, he was abandoning the ideal of spiritual order and leaving the new economic forces to develop uncontrolled without any higher social direction. . . . But though these ideas accompanied the rise of the machine order, they are in reality profoundly inconsistent with that order and with the scientific genius, and to-day they are either dead or in process of dissolution."[3] To revert to primitivism would be not only to relinquish our hard-won " control of our material environment " but to deny precisely that faculty of reason which would enable us to correct and perfect what it has begun. We have made the machine; we can remake it, having learnt our uncomfortable lesson, to better effect. Our duty is to discriminate, not to destroy. " The christian answer " Maurice Reckitt wrote very truly, " must surely be that the task is possible, but that it cannot be done without the recognition of a true scale of values, which only religion can sufficiently elucidate and guarantee. The blind acceptance of machinery in

[2] Maurice B. Reckitt, *A Christian Sociology for To-day*, p. 177.

[3] *Christianity and the New Age*, p. 101.

all its existing forms and for all the purposes for which it is now employed is a form of idolatry to which the christian can never submit. But there is an opposite recklessness in the wholesale condemnation of machinery which seems to carry the unperceived implication that God has made a mistake in giving to men scientific and inventive capacities. The christian responsibility is essentially one of discrimination, a responsibility which in regard to this matter christian thinking has scarcely begun to fulfil."[4] And the same writer goes on to offer a number of suggestions as to the lines such discrimination should take, in the way of direction of invention, surrendering of certain products altogether, recovery of joy in work, restriction of the machine to its proper sphere. If the mass of men are not creative, society is rotten and must inevitably decay: the preservation and utilization of the creative faculty is the end which must govern our economy. Machinery as such is not opposed to this: "When the machine controls the man his skill evaporates; when he guides or controls the machine . . . his skill remains, and may even be enhanced."[5] True, the machine must be consonant with human creativity not only in use but in the making of it: it is not enough that the men who use it should be responsible and creative workmen if the men who make it are not. But even this necessity need not altogether daunt us. We have to remember that the economic structure as we know it has been built in complete disregard of christian or humanist ideals; human invention has had other motives; we should not despair, in view of the ingenuity already proven, of the possibility of that ingenuity being put to new uses. Nor should we minimize the fascination which machinery holds for so many minds, and which makes the controlling of them and tinkering with them congenial.[6] What we have to aim at

[4] *op. cit.* p. 180.

[5] Stuart Chase: *Men and Machines,* p. 180 (quoted Reckitt, *op. cit.* p. 178).

[6] "'And, of course, electricians,' Cecily inserted again, as she

eliminating is the purely mindless work which is still so common at our present stage. And there is hope, it would seem, of achieving this. Stuart Chase enumerated three stages in the evolution of the machine. "First," he wrote, "they supplied more power to the skilled worker. They increased his output but left his job substantially unchanged. Second, they subdivided the manufacturing process, allowing unskilled or semi-skilled workers to feed them, remove the output, and carry on the few repetitive motions which their tending required. This is the robot stage. Third, they replaced the unskilled worker with their own steel fingers, doing the feeding, processing, packaging, themselves. *The skilled man comes back into the picture* as inspector, repairer, adjustor of delicate controls. His job is interesting, non-repetitive; requires intelligence. The robot has largely disappeared."[7] It is to the development of this third stage, already according to this writer to some extent established, that we have to look. There is also the possibility that many of the problems which face us to-day in this connection will be solved by the utilizing of our newly-discovered sources of power, more especially in the changes this may well bring about in working and living conditions.

We have more to do, however, than reorganize our existing machinery; it is not merely that we use it in the wrong way; we have also to ask ourselves whether we are not guilty of using it, and using it on a vast scale, in the wrong place. There are things that only the machine can do; there are things that the machine can do better than the hand; there are other things that the hand can do better

[7] *op. cit.* p. 104 (quoted Reckitt, *op. cit.* p. 176).

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paused, 'and the men who fix up one's car in garages. They're charming. All the men who work gadgets are nice, I think.'

"'Dear me,' said Sir Donald, 'but I believe you're right, now I come to think of it. Perhaps it's because they enjoy their work.'" (Muriel Jaeger: *Retreat from Armageddon*, p. 37).

than the machine, and that the hand ought to do if man is not to suffer.

It is sometimes argued that we ought to abolish machinery because, quite apart from the fact that it produces unemployment, it must result in the leisure state, and this is evil, for the devil finds work for idle hands: better to be employed by man than by the devil. The fact, first of all, that in our world plenty is compatible with starvation is a convincing proof of the outrageous stupidity or wickedness of our world,[8] and of the fact that the establishment of christian principles, so far from being sentimental clap-trap, is a fundamental necessity without which economic or political expedients must be of little avail.

We could, if we were sensible enough, copy the inhabitants of Rathé, among whom, we are told, unemployment "arises every time an industry produces more goods than the community can consume, and it is regarded as a sign that that industry has worked well and deserves a rest until the balance is restored"; we could, like them, reduce drudgery "to a minimum by means of machinery" instead

[8] "'Is a plentiful supply of goods a disadvantage?' says he.
"'Of course it is,' I replied. 'It throws people out of employment.'
"'Naturally,' said he. 'But isn't that an advantage?'
"'Far from it,' said I (speaking from experience).
"'What?' cries Yasint. 'Is leisure a calamity too?'
"'It is, if you're poor,' said I. 'Only in that case you don't call it leisure. Unemployment, my dear sir, is the great problem of our times, and no Government so far has been able to solve it.'
"'I don't understand you,' said Yasint stupidly. 'Surely unemployment and poverty cannot exist together?'
"'Get along,' says I. 'How do you make that out?'
"'They are mutually exclusive,' says he. 'If a portion of the community is unemployed, it can only mean that everybody's wants are satisfied. If any portion is in want, it means that there is as much work to be done as will satisfy it'
"'That sounds very clever,' I said, 'and may be quite true in theory; but the fact is that we have thousands of people unemployed, and even more living in poverty.'
"'I cannot believe it,' said Yasint."
(Eimar O'Duffy: *The Spacious Adventures of the Man in the Street*, p. 172).

of employing our machines "to pile up luxuries for the few, to rush aimlessly from one part of the world to another, to wipe out handicrafts, and plank a million identical flower vases on a million identical tables, while continuing to clean our streets and sewers by hand". But we should then have something in the nature of a leisure state; and would this be acceptable? "You cannot imagine" wrote Ford Madox Ford, "a population each member of which works only an hour a day spending the whole rest of its time in the cinemas. Yet the only logical and moral end of the result of improvement in the machine can only be millionwise exterminations or a six-hour world working week. There is no third way."[9]

It may be that if we had leisure like the inhabitants of Rathé we should not use it like the inhabitants of Rathé because we have reached a stage of disintegration at which the creative use of leisure is becoming impossible to us. "This our earth" wrote Richard Jefferies in his *Story of my Heart,* "produces not only a sufficiency and a superabundance, but in one year pours a cornucopia of good things forth, enough to fill us all for many years in succession. The only reason we do not enjoy it is the want of rational organization. I know, of course, and all who think know, that some labour or supervision will be always necessary . . . but I maintain that a tenth, nay, a hundredth, part of the labour and slavery now gone through will be sufficient, and that in the course of time, as organization perfects itself and discoveries advance, even that part will diminish. . . . Is ideal man, then, to be idle? I answer that, if so, I see no wrong, but a great good. I deny altogether that idleness is an evil, or that it produces evil, and I am well aware why the interested are so bitter against idleness—namely, because it gives time for thought, and if men had time to think their reign would come to an end."[10] It gives time for thought. Jefferies was of opinion that men would find

[9] *Great Trade Route,* p. 194.

[10] *The Story of my Heart,* 1911 ed., p. 178.

employment enough in the "perfection of their physical frames, in the expansion of the mind, and in the enlargement of the soul". But should we? Or should we merely watch endlessly, perhaps with unseeing eye, the television, until, bored beyond endurance, we began to exterminate one another with all the resources of modern science? The fact is that unless we have and preserve some creative work we lose our humanity; and while the machine should save us the work that is non-creative, the drudgery, the sweeping of our streets and the cleaning of our sewers, it should not take from us the work that is creative and that our hands can better do. There is a tendency to elevate the sanctity of labour to a universal and all-inclusive maxim: to regard any work done with the hands as noble; and this is to shut our eyes to the fact that plenty of manual work is neither noble nor creative; there is a similar tendency to regard not only the leisure state—the complete or almost complete absence of labour—but leisure itself as harmful, and to this the words of Jefferies are a salutary counterblast. But on the other hand there is the danger of viewing humanity under too roseate a hue, of thinking that a world freed of the necessity of toil would be an earthly paradise whereas it would probably be in a very short time a bedlam.

Man is called to imitate the perfection of God by becoming himself a creator; and that must surely mean that his creation, the highest function of his humanity, cannot be relegated to the unimportance of an occasional pastime, a thing with which he can potter of an evening after the business of the day is done. The making of things is the expression of man's personality; it is the fundamental thing; and if we give it over to the machine we are giving over our humanity to the machine. The flagrant example of this self-betrayal is found of course in the activities we are accustomed to call the arts. But creation is not, or ought not to be, limited to the fine arts. "Art is defined as the right way of making things; anything whatever, so that we

have arts of cookery and horsemanship, as well as of carpentry, painting, and music. . . . In normal societies, the artist is not a special kind of man, but every man is a special kind of artist. In other words . . . every normal man earns a livelihood by exchanging the products of his particular skill for the surplus products of his neighbours, otherwise endowed. Thus every man has a vocation, which is also his livelihood. The word 'vocation' rings strangely in modern ears, accustomed to think only in terms of jobs, and of all kinds of jobs only as means to leisure. The idea of vocation, or calling, once the economic basis of civilization, will appear only the more strange the more we look at it. It is in his vocation that a man expresses himself, not indeed wilfully, with a view to exhibiting himself, but precisely because it is his very own nature that fits him for the vocation to which he is summoned by that nature. . . . It is by means of, and not in spite of, his work, that he can grow in intellectual and spiritual stature, whether he be a cobbler or an architect."[11]

We shall not become men, on the contrary we shall become more and more subhuman, if we make our machines do for us the work which would have expressed our natures and raised our statures, and leave ourselves only the privilege of minding the machines. What then must we do if we are to avoid the extreme both of luddism and of technocracy? "You cannot imagine a population each member of which works only an hour a day spending the whole of the rest of its time in the cinemas. . . . But you can imagine a six-hour working week population spending considerable time and regaining its mental and intellectual health growing string beans, attending on milch goats, moving hurdles for sheep among roots, weaving woollen stuffs, thinning out woodlands, carving bedposts, painting frescoes in cinema halls, felling timber . . . and having all its afternoons and evenings and most of the winter months for

[11] A. K. Coomaraswamy: *Patron and Artist*, p. 20.

the movies, the theatres, the concert halls, the churches, the nightclubs, the dancing floors."[12] Can a man express himself in things of this sort? "You will be met at once by the objection that people do not like growing things. . . . There can be no greater mistake. The only thing that all men like is obtaining something for nothing . . . and there is no greater thrill of satisfaction than seeing, pushing through the earth, the first shoots from the seeds you have sown. . . . And no State can be called civilized that, along with bread and circuses, does not accord to all its subjects the sacred right to dig."[13] If we dig or sew or do whatever fits our natural bent, not as a hobby but as our main concern, then we can hope to be able to do two other things satisfactorily: to make our machines serve us, and to make use of our leisure time for contemplation. Man, St Thomas tells us, needs a certain amount of leisure and a certain measure of material well-being if he is to contemplate—the machine is ours to use to this end; but we shall use it safely only if our main activity in life is creative, and if our values are sound. And by this last phrase is meant that we have to get rid of the commercial virtues which, we are told, the Nordic races introduced into a peaceful world, and which puritanism canonized. "The only things that can save the world are a certain Mediterranean brand of slackening off in every department of life —a slackening off in everything from conscious rectitude and its brother sense of acquisitiveness to the sense of efficiency and the hours of labour worked . . . rectitude for the sake of gain, honesty which is only the best policy, continence so that you may creep into the back door of heaven, frugality for the sake of adding to your store."[14] When we have sought first the kingdom of heaven; when we have put the human personality before big business, quick returns, the lust for power; when we have realized that our race is dying of inanition because of its lack of

[12] Ford Madox Ford, *op. cit.* p. 194. [13] *ibid.* p. 42.
[14] Ford Madox Ford, *op. cit.* p. 194.

creation, and so have refused to be dictated to by the vital interests of money and have returned like Candide to the cultivation of our back gardens; when we have taken the fundamental step of substituting the good of man for the profit-motive; then we can have hope for the future, we can hope that the machine will be kept in its place and be of use to mankind.[15] "For myself I look forward to a day

[15] "The only factor of our present situation that is certain to continue progressively is that of the improvement of the machine. That means the dispossessing of more and more millions of men. There is no avoiding that. It is as certain as death. We shut our eyes to both phenomena. A second factor only not quite so certain is the progressive mental and physical deteriorating of our populations because of indoor, mechanized occupations and the consumption of inferior food. You can safely say that an immensely large proportion of our city and near-city populations never, between their cradles and their graves, taste meats or fruits unpreserved with deleterious chemicals or vegetables straight from the ground. Both these factors, or either one of them, must lead us to disaster." (Ford Madox Ford, *op. cit.* p. 193.)

It is of course true according to economic theory that the introduction of machinery in a given industry, though it immediately throws men out of employment, does not ultimately do so but on the contrary may increase the demand for employment, both for the production of the machinery and in subsidiary and other industries, since the lowering of production-costs consequent on the introduction of the machine lowers the price of the commodity and so increases demand. But in practice there have to be considered: (1) the skilled workman ousted by the machine and unsuited for other jobs; (2) the possibility that the price of the commodity will not in fact be allowed to fall (monopoly); (3) the possibility that the increased demand will be directed towards commodities which will not involve a corresponding increase in employment; (4) the possibility that the surplus income of the consumers may be directed to commodities which the dispossessed workers cannot produce (e.g. an increase in demand for goods produced in Switzerland will not help dispossessed workers in India).

The mass-production of chemically preserved foods to be the staple diet of the population is only possible where finance is put first and the fundamental things last. The small producer is here a necessity to save the physical health as well as the spiritual integrity of the world. And while a more intelligent use of machinery coupled with an intelligent use of currency might conceivably release us from the necessity of growing our daily bread by the sweat of our brows, we should not ultimately benefit; the labour which is lavished on the garden-plot of so many suburban houses or on the "allotment" every week-end reveals how widespread is the

when, the automobile being as nearly extinct as is to-day the railway, men shall live in great or small but intensively cultivated areas. Once or twice a week men shall fly to the power centres, do their three-hour shifts, superintending the actions or executing the repairs of the power-supplying machines . . . or their field work in the great grain centres and ranches. The rest of the time they will occupy with the agreeable and unhurried labour of their own soil or with their own benches, chisels, easels, fiddle bows, lasts. . . . and with whatever form of night life they shall find agreeable when the day is over. Occasionally even they will take a read in a book."[16]

It is the christian's duty to work for the salvation, natural and supernatural, of the world; for the re-ordering of society, the re-establishment of christian principles. To that apostolate the first preliminary is a firm grasp of the true hierarchy of values. The principle of non-interference has eaten into our society; the divorce of religion from life is an ever-present danger; not unless it is realized that religion means much more than hymn-singing and harmoniums can this apostolate be even begun. We are sometimes in the position of those men of whom our Lord spoke, who cried to him "Lord, Lord" and received a nasty jolt at the judgement. It is urgently necessary to cry "Lord, Lord"; but grace will not achieve the reorganization of society if nature is inactive.

To affirm the rights of the whole man and the universality of the ethical and religious principles on which they are based; to have a positive social philosophy which is the realization in society of religious truth: this is the foundation of the programme of christian action in the world to-

[16] Ford Madox Ford, *op. cit.* p. 196.

vocation to fulfilment of personality through the soil. We shall always need the machine to supplement the hand, both to increase productivity and to increase the variety of the market in any given country; but if we renounce our right to grow our own food in our own way and in our own land we are renouncing not a useless drudgery but a birthright.

day. Human society is, in Kant's phrase, a "kingdom of ends" not a machination of cogs. The call to acceptance of christian principles is the first necessity. The second is their application to particular issues in the regulation of economic factors. If demand is universally christian, supply will, by pressure of the "impersonal forces of the market", become christian too; if rationalization of industry is carried out with a view to human and not merely economic advance it will be really rational; if a planned economy is founded upon christian principles it will really be a re-ordering; if utilization of invention is measured by the advantage of society as a whole and not simply of the shareholders it will really be a progress; if machinery is used to supplement human power and save drudgery, to perfect creativity and not to destroy it, to civilize and not to subhumanize, it will serve instead of ousting the kingdom of God.[17] The determinist economics of *laissez-faire*, the false abstraction of the economic man, were founded on the ethical assumption of egoism; if the world can be persuaded to demonstrate in practice that the assumption is false it will *eo ipso* have gone far towards remedying the chaos into which it has thrown us.

First then, a right vision of the order of things is required; a right subordination of ends. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God"—that is why even a legitimate economic advance must be sacrificed at times for the sake of a greater good, and why, if material progress had been measured by spiritual requirements, we should not be in our present predicament. The world must be made safe for christianity, and therefore for man.

And the history of christianity, while it gives us a warning as to method, gives us also a lesson in hope. The victories of the Church have been won not by a violent subversion of order but by a patient re-ordering of

[17] The Chinese, having invented gunpowder, for two centuries used it for fireworks; similarly Leonardo thought his flying-machine might be profitably used to bring snow from the mountains to the parched streets of Lombardy.

manners of thought. The Whigs of the nineteenth century freed slaves with a flourish of trumpets and money-bags, and thereby as like as not condemned the emancipated negroes to a distress for the most part worse than that from which they had been released; the Church abolished slavery by gradually creating in society a positive attitude of mind with which slavery was incompatible. Not negatively to clamour for destruction, but positively and with patience to work for a renewal of spirit, and then for the reorganization of our material, the actual re-establishment of the christian order and the humanism which it implies: this is the pith of the christian programme. For christianity, in this as in other contexts, is affirmative; and a programme of affirmation is the condition of success. A positive, affirmative outlook is living and dynamic; an outlook, like a society, which is absorbed in negations is rotten.

CHAPTER 10

Christian Marriage

"AND ADAM called all the beasts by their names, and all the fowls of the air, and all the cattle of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper like himself." Preceding chapters have discussed the life of man in terms of that seeking for perfection, through the actualization of the potential, in which according to the view of St Thomas we are to come to the likeness of God in so far as it may be shared by human nature. That perfection was seen to lie outside and above the individual: primarily consisting in the worship and love of God and union with him, yet even apart from this connoting always a centrifugal direction, turning outwards towards a reality greater than the individual, towards the human society of which he is a part, towards the manifold contacts with other

individuals of which the texture of that social life is so largely made up, towards all the supra-personal ideals to which men devote themselves and without which they would fail precisely in their quest for happiness; finding, that is, in disinterested love and service the happiness to which they are called but which if they pursued it selfishly would elude them. If we are to be faithful to this line of thought, it is from a similar angle that we must approach here the subject of marriage.

There can be no complete picture of human life, of the perfection of the person, which excludes society, for without society the individual is necessarily incomplete. But the life of society itself is not enough. We have to avoid, if we are to be real and complete men, not only the narrowness and unawareness which threaten the solitary life, but also the superficiality which threatens the social life. Man stands in need of a helper like unto himself; for his own physical and psychical perfection, for the awakening of the deeper springs of his being, in mind and heart and will, and the calling forth of the most meaningful powers of devotion and self-sacrifice, he needs the revelation and the motive force found in the love of another human being with whom life is shared and at the same time raised to a new value by the creation of a new reality, the common life of the family, which transcends the individual. That common life, rooted in the self-forgetful attitude of mutual devotion, the undivided loyalty which is summed up in the word *dilectio*—the choosing out of the loved person over against all others, and in the inclusive love given *by* the whole person *to* the whole person, with all that this connotes of desire of self-offering, all that the Middle Ages meant by their word *amicitia*—all this is, in God's providence, the normal way of attaining to that perfection which is his will for us.

We must beware here of a dangerous misconception. The truth that man finds happiness only in so far as he grows in forgetfulness, that he finds his life only in so

far as he loses it, and achieves his own perfection only in so far as he grows in disinterestedness and love, is nowhere more in danger of being forgotten in our days than in the context of marriage. Selfishness is at the root of our troubles and difficulties; and if we were to suppose that the analysis of the advantages of marriage to the individual provided also a statement of the attitude of mind which should govern men and women in their approach to marriage we should be in danger of erecting selfishness into a dogma. It is true that in marriage a man finds happiness and fulfilment; it would be the end of all values if he were to look solely for happiness and fulfilment in marriage. " It is in marriage " St Thomas remarks, " that the greatest *amicitia* must exist "; and *amicitia* he defines, as against *amor concupiscentiae* or desire, as the love whose object is not *what* one desires but the person *for whom* one desires good; as giving, therefore, more than receiving; so that the lover " wills good for the beloved as for himself, thinks of the beloved as another self "; and it is this that Augustine approves in the phrase of Horace, *dimidium animae meae*, " the half of my soul ". This essential quality of love explains why the pseudo-Denys tells us that the *divinus amor* " causes ecstasy ", for " a man is said to suffer ecstasy when his will goes forth as it were from himself and is drawn into another "; and this is verified most fully in the love of *amicitia* when a man's love is " drawn absolutely outside himself inasmuch as he wills the good of the beloved, and brings about this good as his own care and concern—*quasi gerens curam et providentiam ipsius*—for the sake of the beloved "[1]. The essence of love is self-transcendence; it is in this, in the fact that in marriage especially *amicitia* is to be found, that St Thomas sees a proof of the indissolubility of the marriage vows, for " the deeper the *amicitia*, the more stable and lasting it ought to be "[2]; and it is only in so far as this love, as against selfish

[1] *Sum. Theol.* I. II. xxviii, 1 & 3. [2] *Contra Gent.* III. cxxiii.

desire, is found in marriage that happiness can be hoped for.

The burden of the Church's warnings about married life to-day is that this idea of love is in danger of being lost. The crumbling of stability which easy divorce has brought inevitably in its train; the degradation of sex to the level of a plaything—in D. H. Lawrence's phrase, a cocktail; the break-up of family life and the disappearance of family *pietas*: all these are evidence of the loss in our world of the idea of the nature of love and, in consequence, of marriage.

We do well to remind ourselves of Lawrence's scalding indictment of "counterfeit love". "The peculiar hatred of people who have not loved one another but have pretended to, even perhaps have imagined they really did love, is one of the phenomena of our time." True, we must not forget on the other hand his warning: "we are none of us all of a piece, none of us *all* counterfeit, or *all* true love. . . . The tragedy is, that in an age peculiarly conscious of counterfeit, peculiarly suspicious of substitute and swindle in emotion, particularly sexual emotion, the rage and mistrust against the counterfeit element is likely to overwhelm and extinguish the small, true flame of real loving communion which might have made two lives happy. Herein lies the danger of harping only on the counterfeit and the swindle of emotion as most 'advanced' writers do." But we cannot be too fully alive to the swindle itself. "A young couple fall in counterfeit love and fool themselves and each other completely. But alas, counterfeit love is good cake but bad bread. It produces a fearful emotional indigestion. Then you get a modern marriage, and a still more modern separation."[3] As the stability, the *diuturnitas,* which is of the essence of marriage is more and more completely forgotten, and the idea of sex as a plaything more and more generally accepted, marriage tends to be regarded more and more exclusively as a pleasurable, fleeting experience

[3] *Apropos,* pp. 31, 34, 2[illegible]

which carries with it no obligations and demands nothing more heroic or more human than the procuring of a little sensual and selfish satisfaction, the giving of a sentimental and superficial consideration. And the core of this counterfeit is seen in the growing indifference to the thing which love essentially demands: childbearing. Real love is creative; beginning with absorption in the loved person, it grows into an imperative craving for the creation in common of a new thing, at once the final expression of love and the formation of a new entity, again both transcending the individuals and exalting them, the family.

The perfection of the person normally demands that *consortium* which is the completion of two persons in one another on every level of life. But it demands equally a second thing: the creativeness without which that *consortium* itself is meaningless. There must be, in Lawrence's phrase, the "oneness gradually accomplished throughout a lifetime"; but there must also be the creation in which this oneness is expressed: "the sense of being a potential creator and law-giver, as father and husband, is perhaps essential to the day-by-day life of a man, if he is to live full and satisfied"; and this instinct for creation is yet deeper and more imperative in woman than in man. But we shall do violence to the idea of marriage not only if we neglect either of these two things, the love of man and woman, and childbearing, but also if we separate them; each has its perfection and its fullest meaning in the other; each without the other is truncated: love from which the idea of children is excluded is sterile; childbearing which is not prompted by love is arid.

Here again, then, we must beware of an over-emphasis. The primary end of marriage, in the christian view, is the creation of a family. The greatest dignity of man and woman is in this creative act which makes them, in the grand phrase of Pope Pius XI, the "ministers, as it were, of the divine omnipotence". Where this is left out of

account the marriage is necessarily in danger, through selfishness, of becoming no more than the indulgence of an individual; and the tendency to-day to leave it out of account demands a more than usual emphasis upon it. But on the other hand we shall be doing a grave injustice to the christian conception of love if we underestimate the value of all the other elements essential to marriage: if we concentrate so exclusively on the idea of the family as to forget the idea of companionship, and the love of the two individuals for each other, from which it springs and with which in reality it is essentially identified.[4] That a man should regard the woman he marries as an instrument through which to accomplish his own perfection is unthinkable; on the other hand to view marriage simply in terms of a procreation prompted by a sheer sense of duty would be to rob it of its deepest value, to render it inhuman, and make the children not the natural fruit and expression of love but the effect of a cold and inhuman calculation, while it would end equally in treating the woman simply as a child-bearing machine. *Amicitia intensa,* says St Thomas, arguing against polygamy, *non habeteur ad multos*: "deep love cannot be given at once to many. . . . And if the woman have one husband only, but the man several wives, there will not be equal *amicitia* on both sides: there will be love, not free and spontaneous, but in a sense servile." And again: "*Amicitia* consists in a certain equality. . . . So that if a man were allowed to have several wives there would not be free *amicitia* on the part of the wife for the husband, but servile; and this is proved

[4] In itself, the very drawing of a distinction between the ideas of "family" on the one hand and "companionship" on the other is unreal: "family" means precisely the *vita communis*, the common life, and thus even the childless couple is, or ought to be, a family, creative of something greater than the two individual selves. The distinction is here drawn simply because the two ideas are in fact sometimes set in opposition, one or the other being exalted to the detriment of its correlate, with disastrous results in either case.

by experience, for where polygamy obtains wives are treated rather as handmaids."[5]

Pope Pius XI, condemning the type of emancipation which does away with the "honourable and trusting obedience which the woman owes to the man", remarked how this in the end leads to an attitude of mind not so dissimilar from oriental despotism: "if the woman descends from her truly regal throne to which she has been raised within the walls of the home by means of the Gospel, she will soon be reduced to the old state of slavery (if not in appearance, certainly in reality) and become as amongst the pagans the mere instrument of man"; but he goes on to speak of the "rational and exalted liberty" of the christian wife, and the equality of wife and husband in those rights which "belong to the dignity of the human soul, and which are proper to the marriage contract and inseparably bound up with wedlock".[6] We shall be guilty of a radical misconception if, reacting against the evils which western emancipation has brought in its train, we allow ourselves to interpret the pauline doctrine of obedience in terms of oriental slavery, by regarding the woman, not as the *amica* between whom and the husband there is equality of friendship, but simply as a child-bearing chattel.

When we have made this *caveat*, and have reminded ourselves that the childbearing with which christian marriage is concerned is the childbearing which is demanded by love and itself crowns love, then we can and must emphasize the fact that it is through the loss of a deep and realist idea of sex that marriage to-day so often founders. We tend to lose sight of the mystery and forget the sense of reverence; to lose sight of the idea of creation, here as elsewhere, and forget the "ministry of God's omnipotence". The Church has always stood, and stands, for these things; and it was the recognition of this that prompted Lawrence's great tribute to christianity in his *Apropos*. "Christianity estab-

[5] *Cont. Gent.* III. cxxiv.

[6] *Casti Connubii,* Eng. trans. C.T.S., p. 36.

lished the little autonomy of the family within the greater rule of the State. Christianity made marriage in some respects inviolate, not to be violated by the State. It is marriage, perhaps, which has given man the best of his freedom. . . . Man and wife, a king and a queen with one or two subjects, and a few square yards of territory of their own; this, really, is marriage. It is true freedom because it is a true fulfilment for man, woman, and children." "And the Church created marriage by making it a sacrament, a sacrament of man and woman united in the sex communion, and never to be separated, except by death. . . . Marriage, making one complete body out of two incomplete ones, and providing for the complex development of the man's soul and the woman's soul in unison, throughout a life-time. Marriage sacred and inviolable, the great way of earthly fulfilment for man and woman, in unison, under the spiritual rule of the Church." "The catholic Church recognizes sex, and makes of marriage a sacrament based upon the sexual communion, for the purpose of procreation. But procreation in the south is not the bare and scientific fact, and act, which it is in the north. The act of procreation is still charged with all the sensual mystery and importance of the old past. The man is potential creator, and in this has his splendour."[7]

We have cerebrated and rationalized and grown more and more self-conscious, stifling instead of engracing our deep and real instincts, and substituting counterfeit emotion for them; in Lawrence's terminology, we have lost, first, the depth and reality of sense-awareness, and secondly, our contact with the rhythm of the cosmos (to which catholicism remains faithful); and in consequence "we are bleeding at the roots, because we are cut off from the earth and sun and stars, and love is a grinning mockery, because, poor blossom, we plucked it from its stem on the tree of life, and expected it to keep on blooming in our civilized vase on the table."[8]

[7] *op. cit.* pp. 56-8, 44. [8] *op. cit.* p. 63.

But, faced with the constant and increasing breakdown of marriage in our days, we are tempted to try to remedy the situation by going still further along the path that has led us to it. We try to cover up our loss of the sense of depth and dignity and creative purpose by a recourse to that "exaggerated physiological education" against which Pius XI warned us; and there is every need of his warning, for the education of which he speaks, which teaches "rather the art of sinning in a subtle way" than the art of loving, is in fact in danger of carrying yet further the trend which makes sex simply a plaything, supplying a mass of facts which may indeed be used for the greater happiness of mankind but which are liable, from the presuppositions on which they are based, to drive the fundamental truths yet further and further into the background.

Here again, however, we must be careful to distinguish. For if there is a kind of physiological education which does more harm than good, there is on the other hand an attitude of mind which errs in the opposite direction, and robs the young of an equipment without which marriage may indeed survive, and which in a primitive community might well be irrelevant, but which undoubtedly in our own civilization can be a necessity. Sexual harmony will not of itself make a happy marriage, or a lasting one; it would be nonsense to say, Look after sex and love will look after itself. But on the other hand it is not wholly possible to say the converse; love will overcome most difficulties if it is deep and generous enough; but it is unhappily possible for two people who sincerely love each other to find their marriage ruined or at any rate beset with endless difficulty and sorrow owing to a physical disharmony which might easily have been avoided. Quite unconsciously the man may, through ignorance of a few physical and psychological principles, inflict upon the woman a hurt which will issue in a definite and all but ineradicable antipathy. There is need, not indeed of the instruction which merely sets out to

provide as large a number as possible of variations on the theme of sex-the-plaything, but of the instruction which enables a man to understand a woman and *vice versa*, and so provides, before marriage, a fund of understanding which, destroying neither the sense of mystery nor the spontaneity of love, may guard against the danger of inflicting damage and pain.

For the christian, the physical aspect of marriage, so far from being unimportant on the one hand or of supreme importance exclusively in its own right on the other, is an important human element in one whole thing, the supernaturalized human life. Hence the christian recognizes that education must not be allowed to leave the boy or girl in ignorance of what is necessary to achieve the success of the physical element in marriage, of its importance as an element in a psycho-physical experience, of the moral problems to which it gives rise. And he has a programme which he can advocate fearlessly because he is confident of its truth; he has definite principles to put forward which he knows will make for the curing of disorder and the procuring of happiness; he has an answer to the dilemma proposed by modern opinions and the disorder to which they give rise. At the same time, since we as christians are not likely to be immune from the dangers we discern in contemporary society, it is for us to make sure that our own house is set in order, that we ourselves are successfully putting the principles of christianity into practice.

Education means essentially, not filling the child's mind with an infinity of facts, mathematical, historical, linguistic and the rest, but preparing him through a unified development and formation of his personality at all its levels—sense-awareness, mind, heart and character—to make his own life for himself when the days of school or university are over.[9] It does not mean that he will have no more to learn, but that he will know how to learn; not that he will

[9] Cf. *The Water and the Fire*, ch. vi; *Awake in Heaven*, chs. x & xi; and *The Heart of Man*, ch. vi.

never have to think or judge, but that he will know how to think and judge. His life, his career in the fullest sense, is something that he has to create for himself; he has to achieve his perfection. Now the normal development of man is not solitary; it implies marriage. Education then must envisage marriage as the normal means of perfection; must in consequence see that the boy or girl is fitted to learn, think and judge sufficiently and correctly about marriage and all that it implies. The child passes through various stages of increasing sex-awareness, each of which presents him with problems to be solved, questions to be answered, and a failure to answer them on the part of those whose duty it is may result in mental stress at the time and possibly faulty development later on. What is here more immediately to the point is that even when the child is told about the act of intercourse itself—and very few children seem to know more about marriage than that when they go out into the world, though they normally acquire a great deal of irrelevant or harmful information about sex—the implication is that this is all that he need know.[10] It is precisely here that the tragedy lies: not so much that he lacks detailed information as that the little he has is supposed to be sufficient and therefore gives him a wholly *materialist* view of marriage. Materialist and in another sense cartesian, in both ways anti-christian. Cartesian because there is the complete dichotomy: you spend your life with another person, you talk and eat together; then on the other hand there are these recurring physical acts; and between the two parts of married life no real connection, no interaction, no influence is recognized. Materialist, therefore, because those physical acts themselves are regarded as simple, animal, a pleasing but somewhat mechanical procedure.

[10] It is sometimes said that instruction in the art of marriage is quite unnecessary, since instinct is perfectly capable of dealing with the matter; and the unlettered savage is quoted as proof of this. Actually, as Malinowski has pointed out with regard to the Melanesians for instance, the poor savage sometimes has a pitying contempt for the methods and manners of western man.

It is no good blinding our eyes to the facts, saying that this is all very exaggerated and that of course young people get along quite well and are quite happy and not nearly so complex as the theorist is apt to make them out to be. The facts will not be gainsaid: too often marriages are not happy in any real, complete sense; people do "get along quite well," and that is exactly the misery of it; they make a compromise with fate; they accept a dull neutral jogtrot sort of life as better than a lot of fuss, and resign themselves to it. It is worth examining the dichotomy of physical from psychical more closely.

In its roots it is but one instance of the effect of that conventional residue of morality to which christian principles have shrunk in our society. Goodness is presented, if presented at all, in terms of a negative morality; christianity, which gives life to law through its creative ideal of growth towards something, of the making of a whole personality in touch with God through and through, and consequently of the use of all the elements of life to promote that growth: all this is lacking. And the result is that a young man or woman will feel that certain things are forbidden and so may try to avoid them, but there the influence of morality will stop, and the recurrent physical acts will remain wholly unrelated to any idea of an organic sharing in the dynamic evolution of the person. It is for the christian then to emphasize that religion is a teleological thing, a life; and a life not disintegrated or amorphous but unified; and unified because aiming, through all the diverse elements that go to make it up, at one end. One of those elements is sex. And the important thing in the present context is that sex is not just an animal thing. The personality cannot be split up; and what is done primarily (or rather, materially speaking) on one plane affects every other. What is done to or by the body affects the mind, what is done to or by the heart affects the body, and so on; and if the physical element in life is wrong every other element will be affected also.

Hence the tragedy of the materialist view of sex. The young man and woman have gone out into the world equipped with the barest rudiments of the physiology of sexual intercourse and *not warned that this meagre equipment* is totally insufficient if they are going to be married. What happens? The man has no idea that this is an art which has to be learned like any other art, that it is a delicate thing that needs infinitely delicate handling; he does his best, and his best is to behave like a bull in a china shop; the woman is hurt either physically or psychologically or both; and that impression once made may never be eradicated, the thing may be ruined, and love may (and often does) turn into hate. This is no abstract theorizing; the doctor's casebooks vouch for its truth. Two absolutely necessary things were lacking; a deeper, more adequate knowledge of sex itself, and a recognition of the psychophysical unity of man; and chaos is the result.

Even when complete ruin does not result, the same causes will at any rate prevent the success of marriage, will devitalize instead of perfecting, will bring about disintegration instead of union. The perfect act is that in which both man and woman arrive simultaneously at its climax. But they are differently made, the woman is normally slower in her reactions than the man, and this means that there must be careful adjustment; preliminaries, desirable in themselves, become an absolute necessity in order that the rhythm of the slower partner may catch up, so to say, with that of the other. Similarly, if the union is to be creative, perfecting and completing and not exacerbating, there must be not a sudden cessation but a gradual diminuendo of intensity, the preliminaries must be paralleled by analogous care as epilogue. The conscious or unconscious brutality which omits either of these things will breed hate, not love, because the resultant tension and disharmony where there should be quiescence and completion will inevitably react on the mind. Physical maladjustment must always tend to lead to psychical antipathy.

There is a further danger to be considered: that of false moral standards which bring about the same results. Conventional morality as it in fact exists will produce in the mind of the child a fear, more or less prurient, of the body and its functions in so far as these latter are vaguely regarded as shameful. He has to beware, if he is to be respectable, of breaking the rules—the temper of mind which takes the word "immorality" to mean exclusively sexual sin is not absent from our education—but the rules themselves are vague for they are not counterbalanced by any recognition of a morality of affirmation. Hence the danger that the young man or woman may come to regard the act of physical union as something which may be indulged in legitimately indeed, but always rather shamefacedly, always perhaps in the subconscious fear that anything other than the strict necessities will be sinful. "With my body I thee worship", the christian liturgy bids the bridegroom say; but how is this to be reconciled with all that he has been taught? How indeed can it be true, unless union is creative as well as procreative, contemplative and not merely a brief physical activity?

Contemplative: here we return to the social evils with which these private tragedies are related. The first evil consequence of these latter is evident, for how shall children not suffer who are begotten in this atmosphere and reared in a household the keynote of which is not the joy of dynamic growth in love and unified experience but the deadly disintegration of a static compromise? And what chance is there for them of a stable and happy family life, without which as foundation a stable and happy political society is impossible?

A happy atmosphere in the home is dependent mainly on the existence of a happy and stable husband and wife; this union is too often affected by the factors which have been discussed; and they have been discussed at some length because they are as avoidable as they are disastrous. But it would be very shortsighted to suppose that once all this is

put right there remains nothing further to be done. Evils of this kind may well wreck a marriage; their absence does not necessarily mean a happy marriage.

A marriage which had no other basis than a physical attraction would have little chance of survival: if there is to be a real union of personalities there must be a " marriage of true minds " and a deep unity of will. We speak of love-*making*, rightly, since love is not just the enjoyment of something given, something dropped ready-made from the skies, but the gradual, patient and sometimes painful making of what is not there to begin with, and a making which involves every level of our psycho-physical life.

The more deeply we come to know people the more we realize how scanty our understanding of them really is. A human being is a mystery; and therefore, like other mysteries, is to be approached with great reverence and humility and in the sure knowledge that a mystery cannot be learnt in a day or a year or without long and patient effort. It is often hard for two men or two women to understand each other, because of their differences of mental calibre, of background, tradition, upbringing, of prejudices or presuppositions; it is much harder for a man and a woman to understand each other because as a rule there is between them, besides all these individual differences, a difference of psychological types. Men tend to think that women are irrational; women, that men's minds are of use only within the narrow confines of science, economics, commercial affairs. Certainly one cannot generalize without great caution, because no human being is wholly masculine or wholly feminine; but it seems true to say that for the most part men are more predominantly rational (which is not to say that their thoughts and words and actions are always reasonable) and that women are more predominantly intuitive (which is not to say that their intuitions are always valid). It follows that the marriage of such minds can be particularly valuable precisely because their differences make them complementary: they

can correct, enrich, complete each other; but it also follows that the task of mutual understanding is likely to be an arduous one. Young married couples sometimes think, when they have their first quarrel, that all is over: on the contrary, it may be just beginning. Real union has to be achieved through toil and perhaps tears.

Then there is the unity of heart, of will, to be made. No two people, however deeply in love, can expect to find that their needs or desires, their tastes, moods, interests, impulses will always be in harmony; nor can it even be said that their differences will be constant and therefore to that extent manageable, for we are feckless creatures and our moods and impulses are largely unpredictable. But unity of heart does not mean the elimination of every difference: it does mean that gradually, underneath all the superficial differences, a deep basic unity of purpose is achieved. *Ti voglio bene*, Italian lovers say: if love is to be deep and enduring, if it is really to achieve a real union of personalities, it must be based on the *will* to make one life out of two, to make it gradually, patiently, lovingly, as the years go by, at every level of life, and to make it in the knowledge that difficulties must often arise, perhaps very great ones, but that they can be the material of an increase in the depth and richness of life.

Christians are given the sacrament of marriage partly to help them in this making of love and in overcoming the difficulties they must face not only in the making of their own love but in the making of the family and in defending it against the various dangers—economic or social or perhaps political—which may beset it. But the sacrament is given also that man and wife may make of their life and their home something not merely humanly but divinely lovely, lovely *in vitam aeternam*, leading to and forever rejoicing in eternal life.

We have therefore, here as elsewhere, to safeguard the primary rights of the human personality and of the family; but we have also to set against the counterfeit and the sub-

human and the only partially human the full richness and dignity and depth of marriage not only as *officium naturae,* as the natural way of fulfilment of human life and love, but also as *sacramentum,* as effective symbol of the union of Christ with his Church.

"As, in the other sacraments," says St Thomas, "spiritual reality is shown forth in figure in the performance of external ceremonial, so in this sacrament the union of man and woman is the figure of Christ and his Church, according to the words of the Apostle, *Sacramentum hoc magnum est; ego autem dico in Christo et in Ecclesia.* And because the sacraments effect what they signify, it is to be believed that on those who marry is conferred a grace whereby they are drawn into the union of Christ and his Church; and this is supremely necessary for them, in order that thus they may in such wise concern themselves with fleshly and earthly things as not to be separated from Christ and from the Church."[11]

Creators, "king and queen," *amicus* and *amica,* symbols of the indissoluble union of Christ and the Church, and channels through which the grace of the sacrament is conferred: all this is in a different world from the world of superficial hedonism and selfishness and counterfeit with which we are so often confronted to-day. Not in these, but only in those, is the basis of the real human life, the promise of real human perfection, and therefore the making of the good society. A nation in which the idea of love, marriage, family, is disintegrating is itself in process of disintegration; in so far as, to-day, love is in fact losing its fullness of meaning, marriage its depth, the family its unity and community and independence of life, the nation is threatened, and, ultimately, the world.[12]

[11] *Cont. Gent.* IV, lxxviii. (Knox Transl.)

[12] For a fuller treatment of some of the aspects of christian married life touched on here, cf. my *The Heart of Man,* chs. III & VI; *Awake in Heaven,* ch. IX; *The Divine Pity,* ch. VIII; *The Water and the Fire,* ch. VII.

CHAPTER II

The Peaceful Somnolence of Christianity

"THE PEACEFUL somnolence of christianity."[1] How grotesque it sounds to the christian; yet sometimes how true! True in so far as we have made it so. The writer is speaking of a catholic church. Eliane went in from the rough and tumble of the street, and shut out the noise of the world "with a little leather-padded door, which sighed indulgently as it swung on its hinges". Writers of the sentimentally pious sort sometimes make much of this tranquillity: the heroine enters the building, the "little leather-padded door" swings softly to; and in the unearthly solemn stillness which supervenes upon the bustle of sublunary life great and wonderful thoughts steal gently upon the soul. The little leather door is the gate of paradise, not because through it one comes to the altar at which Mass is offered, Mass during which, as has been truly said, the curtain of time is rolled back and one does really step into eternity because into union with an eternal act, but, on the contrary, because the building itself is invested with a quality of timelessness from the mere fact that one cannot hear the traffic.

That a church should be quiet is obviously necessary; but what it is that makes it so, or rather what it is that produces the atmosphere in fact discernible in it, demands scrutiny. What is the reality for which "timelessness" is the pious novelist's perhaps unwarranted label? Is it truer perhaps to say that it is not a reality, but precisely an escape from reality?

If there were no such thing as distraction we should all go out of our minds. A too prolonged concentration on

[1] Cf. Julian Green: *The Strange River*, p. 107.

any job, physical or mental, is apt to lead to a breakdown. "A man needs pleasure as a physic against the manifold troubles and sorrows of life." Human existence being what it is, we often need a means of relief from the stress of troubles and anxieties which threaten to crush the spirit. But we have to distinguish between two sorts of seeking for relief: recreation and escapism; finding relief in work or wine or music or travel or prayer is very different from finding oblivion in drink or in drugs. To make the Grand Tour is one of the classic methods of healing a broken heart; for the efficacy of the grape in uplifting the spirit we have, among a host of other eulogies, the authority of the Archpoet himself:

Poculis accenditur
animi lucerna
cor inbutum nectare
volat ad superna.[2]

To relieve the nervous exacerbation due to an exacting task, an insistent worry, by playing a Brandenburg is not to escape from reality but on the contrary to find new energy for activity in one sphere of reality by imbibing it from another. We hope that, the Brandenburg ended, the spirit will find itself invigorated, renewed; that the work in hand will progress more successfully, the anxiety be faced with greater calm. So St Thomas took not to flight but to praying when the prolonged struggle of his speculation could find no issue. Prayer is of its nature the opposite of escapism, for it is the means of energizing the spirit for the business of living, while being at the same time for the prayerful man a liberation and a refreshment. Very different to

[2] Miss Waddell translates:

'Tis the fire that's in the cup
Kindles the soul's torches,
'Tis the heart that's drenched in wine
Flies to heaven's porches.
(*Medieval Latin Lyrics*, p. 179.)

induce in oneself the unreality of torpor, to look for repose not in due degree and as a temporary measure but as a complete and exclusive policy of life, for this would be merely universal defeatism. Religion is of course a comfort for troubled mind and heart; and this is true not merely in the fundamental sense that the world is well lost if God be found, but also in the sense that we are right to take advantage of any emotional and sensuous relief which the practice of religion may provide. God is not likely to take umbrage if overwrought nerves or burdened mind find solace in the silence and tranquillity of his house. And in general, while senses and emotions are not the basis of religion, they have their place in it. Worship is not a purely intellectual thing, for it is the whole man who must pay homage to God, not merely the mind.

What then is the religious escapism against which we have to guard? It is the turning of religion completely into a search for emotional or sensuous indulgence, using the pleasure which may be found in religion's outward appurtenances simply to forget its inner reality, and so failing to face the problems of every day in the light and with the strength which religion should afford. Evelyn Underhill remarked how the emotional element, necessary in the spiritual life, may become "merely an oblique indulgence of lower cravings", the mere longing for protection, for petting, for rest.[3] This is the danger against which we have to guard, lest religion become the service not of God but of ourselves; and it is for this reason that the criticisms so often levelled against a fashion of church-furnishing and public worship, now happily on the decline, from the papal directives on liturgy to the everyday discussions on repository art, are primarily not aesthetic but theological.

The divorce of religion from life is a not unusual sermon subject. It is not right, we are rightly told, to come to church on Sundays and be self-seeking pagans throughout the week. Religion is not one of many departments of

[3] *The Life of the Spirit*, p. 77.

life; it is not even the most important department of life; if it is religion at all, it must mean the elevation of the whole of life into a new mode. The christian life is not divided into two series of activities, the one carried out upon the natural plane, as shaving, working, enjoying a Brandenburg; the other upon the supernatural, praying. By virtue of the supernatural vitality bestowed on the christian, every natural activity is caught up into a wider sphere of reality, is given new meaning and purpose, becomes operative as a means to the acquiring of an end above and beyond the natural end of man. And if there is no aspect of life, however small and insignificant, into which the efficacy of grace does not penetrate, if on the contrary every problem and every reversal is to be met by the whole united personality, integrally supernaturalized, then obviously there can be no question of "peaceful somnolence" for the christian. There can be no question of an opiate for the people. There can be no congruity in proposing or providing a worship and a place of worship to be no more than a peaceful haven for the bothered soul. There is no room for a little padded door in any but the most material sense. How is it that the undeniably existing dichotomy has come about?

There are the unrealities already referred to. But the trouble goes much deeper than that. There is the view that the retention of a Latin liturgy means the exclusion of all but a few from any full participation in the Church's worship; and from this it is argued that the liturgy cannot but be ineffective in relation to everyday affairs. There is surely a great deal of truth in this contention. Even among those who understand Latin, few find it as alive and cogent as their mother-tongue. For the vast majority, there is the English missal, perhaps; but the fact remains that for them the priest is speaking in an unknown tongue—the thing is lifted out of the realm of immediate contact, and only a great effort of concentration on the substance of what is going forward can make the reality of it vital to the

onlooker. In the prayers of the Mass there is no lack of reference to the world of everyday affairs; but they are liable to pass unnoticed.

The advantages of a Latin liturgy are obvious enough; but those opponents of the vernacular who are either arm-chair-liturgists or else have to deal only with cultured and liturgically well-educated congregations might well acquaint themselves with conditions in some of our larger and poorer parishes where the mass of the people read even their own language only with a certain difficulty and Latin not at all: there they would realize the sense of futility which must overtake anyone who finds himself obliged—in baptisms, churchings, even (and above all) the Mass—to read out long prayers which to the hearers are gibberish. Where the Mass is concerned it is difficult to regard as a perfect arrangement the expedient of reading out an English version of epistle and gospel while the priest is reading them in Latin or (even worse) as part of the "Notices" long after the priest has finished them; and if, as is to be hoped, the time may soon come when every public low Mass will be a dialogue Mass, ought we not to consider for instance whether it is really intelligent for the people to say the *Gloria* or *Credo* in Latin while trying to keep one eye on the English translation so as to know what they are talking about; or whether again it is really intelligent to be saying *Dominus vobiscum, Et cum spiritu tuo*, when they might be saying "God be with you"; "And with you"? A catholic—that is, a universal—liturgy must of its nature be such as can be *easily* understood by *simple* people, and not only understood but actively shared in: can we maintain that our liturgy as we have it at present is like that? If we are realists are we not bound to say that on balance, while there is everything to be said for keeping the Canon of the Mass (and of course the actual "forms" of the other sacraments, the formulas of baptism or of absolution from sin) in Latin, there is equally everything to be said for

having the rest in English : but on one condition—and it is an essential condition—that the English should really be English and not some sort of Italo-Latin jargon.

But again the trouble goes deeper than any question of language. "During the past half-hour she had been thinking, and she had come to the conclusion that she really loved life with all its imperfections and all its drawbacks. She suddenly felt a loathing for the negative state of perfection, dictated to her by her conscience." The negative state of perfection. . . . It is worth inquiring whether the state of perfection envisaged by the average christian is not often too negative. There is a danger that life in its moral aspect may be viewed, not as a progress towards an end, the making of a godly personality, the acquisition of an habitual state of mind and will, but simply as an avoidance of breakages of rules, themselves mentally formulated as prohibitions. The word charity, for example, then suggests first the possibility of having been guilty of sins of thought, word and deed, rather than the fact that love is the stuff of the christian life, growth in which means growth in perfection, in richness, in the power to achieve the end.[4] The whole idea of the virtues as habitual gracious qualities of the soul gives place to an absorption at best in actions consonant with, at worst in actions contrary to, a code. The result is that religion ceases to mean the positive rhythm and pattern of a God-filled life; ceases therefore to influence the making of plans or the ruling of conduct except in so far as it imposes negative restrictions, laying down what may not be done, but not suggesting what may and should. The christian, in other words, when planning some project,

[4] The fact that the Decalogue is couched in terms of negation may easily lead to a wrong bias in practice unless we are careful to remember that, as St Thomas says, "the prohibition of sins and the imposition of sanctions do not suffice for the perfection of the divine law: it must make men wholly fit for everlasting happiness, and this can only be done by the grace of the holy Spirit. . . . Hence it is that the old law is good, indeed, but imperfect, as is said in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*: 'The law brought nothing to perfection'."

may think that in its execution this or that must be avoided; he may not think of the whole business as part of his religious, his christian life; and religion therefore may play the part of a policeman, not, as it ought, of a dynamic centre.

"There she was, at the age of thirty-two without ever having done anything really wrong in her life." She had never done anything really wrong, because she had never done anything at all. She had always been a good negativist. *Rien ne fait rien.* "Not to give other people pain, not to annoy anyone, to efface oneself if called upon to do so—these were the precepts she had nurtured in her soul. . . ." Small wonder she was dim, frustrated, a failure. "Did she feel any better," she asked herself, "for having striven after integrity for so long?" No, for indeed the whole reason of her failure was that she had misunderstood the nature of integrity. How can integrity be found in negation—integrity which means completeness, integral fulfilment? And when christian integrity is viewed as negation, the negation of wrong-doing, how can the result be other than death, even though the soul may think itself a success since, like Eliane, it has never broken the rules? The most horrible kind of death is that which masquerades as life; and the most dreadful spectacle is that of the soul which thinks itself successful and has in fact achieved nothing, is not alive at all.

That without the supernatural a man cannot be truly integral, that religion is what integrates him, or may integrate him if he will, that it fills him, his natural self, with life as a room is suddenly filled with light, that it means in consequence not a negative code but a creative evolution of which the code is but the external formulation—this is the lesson of christianity. It is by learning this lesson that the danger of somnolence is best avoided; for it is in the light of this lesson that worship is adequately estimated, the Mass occupying its proper central position as the sum of human homage, the chief means whereby life is bestowed; the *Ite, missa est* not the end of a spectacle which one has observed

but the beginning of a day which one is to live. The little leather-padded door will not cease to sigh indulgently for the oppressed who seek peace of mind and soul; but it will be very far from symbolizing the be-cushioned tranquillity of escapism, the somnolence and unreality of a religion divorced from life.

CHAPTER 12

Diversity in Worship

"THERE IS no reason in the world" wrote Augustus Welby Pugin, "why noble cities, combining all possible convenience of drainage, water-courses, and conveyance of gas, may not be erected in the most consistent and yet christian character."[1] There is in this engaging statement an implication which Pugin, alas, did not see. "Our domestic architecture," he had said very truly, "should have a peculiar expression illustrative of our manners and habits"; but these latter he chose unfortunately to regard as identical with those of earlier ages, despite the fact that the earlier ages were in no position to convey gas. "We are such men as our fathers were, and therefore should build as they built"; so his argument is summarized. Hence his campaign to revive an architectural form which centuries earlier was already played out; a campaign whose success resulted in that torrential downpour of architectural brussels sprouts under which so many of our shrines and altars still lie buried. "The point" Mr Trappes-Lomax tells us, "was not whether St Peter's might be tolerable in Rome, and Notre Dame in Paris; it was whether the Church in England was to be English or Italianate."[2] The first tragedy was that Pugin identified Gothic with English; the second,

[1] M. Trappes-Lomax, *Pugin*, pp. 191-2. [2] *op. cit.* p. 228.

that in the general struggle between English and Italianate parties, while in architecture Italy came out, in the event, defeated, in the sphere of worship she so largely carried the day.

"Our domestic architecture should have a peculiar expression." So, of course, in any healthy state of society, should everything else, including, pre-eminently, worship. Sanctity, always in essence the same wherever it be found, is nevertheless, in this obvious sense, relative. No two personalities are exactly alike: each race has its peculiar characteristics, each age its peculiar ethos; and the accidents of birth, upbringing and environment combine with these to make every personality unique. The Englishman differs from the Arab primarily because he is of a different race; the Englishman of to-day differs from an Englishman of the time of Chaucer primarily because he is of a different age. But on the other hand, the individuals of a given race in a given age possess many characteristics in common, and it is these which should and normally do find expression in manners, outlook, productions; it is these, to difference ourselves nearer, as Sir Thomas Browne would say, and draw into a lesser circle, it is these which help to differentiate sanctity, for the saint will always (whether consciously or unconsciously) be affected by them, whether by way of assimilation or of reaction. It is these also which should differentiate the manner and formalities of worship; for worship is the offering to God of the whole man, the personality; a formalized offering, where public worship is concerned, but not artificial in the sense of unreal. An Italian, who expresses himself normally through the medium of superlatives and incessant gesticulation, may well find the unadorned reticence of an Englishman's prayer both chilly and unreal; the Englishman may find the Italian's devotional outpourings unreal and embarrassing. A classical age will shrink from the vulgarity of romanticism; the romantic will stifle in the rarefied atmosphere of classic refinement. The prayers of St Alphonsus, the hymns of Father Faber,

would be incongruous on the lips of St Thomas More or Bossuet, to say nothing of St Peter or Boethius. And one does not expect the etiquette of the Court of St James to be identical with that of the Court of the Emperor of China.

Unity in essentials does not mean uniformity in accidentals. "In my Father's house there are many mansions." It is part of that catholicity which is one of the marks of the Church of Christ that its truths should be expressible, its pattern of life realizable, in a multiplicity of forms. Nor is this a question merely of what is possible or permissible. The difference of outlook between the Greek and the Latin Fathers, for example, illuminating as it does two different aspects of the truth, is necessary for the perfection of christian society. The Latin mind will tend to emphasize the rational, the juridical, the organized; the Greek, to concentrate on the intuitive, the spontaneous, the organic. Both aspects are equally necessary, humanly speaking, if over-emphasis is to be avoided. Science can tell us many things about the sun, but not everything; and if left to itself there is the danger that it will in fact "kill the sun for us" as Lawrence said, "making it a ball of gas, with spots". We need the poet and the painter as well. No single race or culture can reflect in its entirety the revelation of God; only in the co-operation of all nations can the fullness of the Body of Christ in this respect be achieved.

"The title *Ecclesia Gentium*" writes Dr Pinsk, "contains a double assertion. It asserts in the first place that the Church brings something to the nations: the Gospel, salvation. But it asserts further that the Church, inasmuch as she builds on these nations, also receives something from them." "To *every* nation will the Church bring the grace and salvation of Our Lord, and from *every* nation will she inherit."[3] It is surprising, in view of these statements, that their author should go on to develop the surely contradictory thesis that Roman-Hellenistic culture is the one human

[3] Johannes Pinsk, *Christianity and Race*, pp. 14, 19.

medium of christianity, so that whoever would accept and endeavour to live the latter must also accept and endeavour to live the former. " Just as all men, if they wish to come to the fullness of the life of God, are referred to [the] human nature of Jesus, no matter whether they are man or woman, so are all nations, no matter to what race they belong, referred to this one Church, which is not a 'spiritual' creation soaring above all worlds, but which represents the spirit of Christ in the concrete, incarnate forms of a definite historical culture—the Roman-Hellenistic—and makes these forms, in view of their content, binding for all men. This means, in plain words, that no race and no national stock can out of its own natural instinct replace these forms by others . . . though they may not tend by nature to mould their religious life in such forms."[4] There is surely in this contention a direct denial of the fundamental principle of christian teaching that grace does not destroy but perfects nature : since it argues, in effect, that this form of culture must be adopted by races for whom it is unnatural, contra-natural; the eastern mind must be forced to think in western terms; the Chinese must learn to honour our Lady through the medium of the art of Saint-Sulpice.

What is essential in christian worship is the sacrifice of the Mass; and the Mass, as the historical evolution of its ceremonies and prayers sufficiently shows, is patient in accidentals of indefinite variation. The idea of sacrifice in general is common to the whole race of man; its outward forms vary; and while the substance of the christian sacrifice must necessarily remain always the same (and its universal acceptance presents no difficulty, since cultural

[4] Dr Pinsk adds: " It is quite wrong, therefore, to say that the chief form of the christian mediation of life in the Church is the 'universally human' form of sacrifice: on the contrary, it is rather the form of the Mystery, as it *formally* existed in the Hellenistic cults, brought to a perfect development." This is surely to confuse history with theology: it is true that the Mass, as we know it, has in part so developed; untrue that the essential sacrifice is incompatible with any other external form.

differences are here in no way involved), the accidentals, the ceremonies or music or surrounding prayers, can and ought to vary.

This question of variation is of fundamental importance in the problems of the reunion of Christendom. "Maritain, Massis and Moenius are correct and speaking in the interests of union when they say that Europe is not the Faith, nor western culture the Roman Church."[5] Oriental christianity can never be the same as the christianity of the west, and we shall be impeding the spread of the Gospel if we try to make it so. The English way of worship is not the Italian way of worship, and we shall impede the work of union if we try to make it so. In the Middle Ages England was estranged from the Papacy by the presence of Italian priests and prelates; in modern times it has been estranged by the presence of Italian practices. There is, as Pugin saw so clearly, an English tradition of piety and worship; it is that to which we must cling if there is to be such a thing as a healthy English catholicism; in the days of the revival it was in this respect the Italian party whose influence predominated. Hence the uncongenial character of so many of the externals of worship in this country, and the consequent difficulties in the way of reunion, for we cannot expect the average man to distinguish between the accidental and the essential, or to be ready, in Tyrrell's phrase, to "swallow the sentiment for the sake of the dogma".

"There is no church," wrote Sir Thomas Browne, "whose every part so squares unto my conscience, whose articles, constitutions, and customs, seem so consonant unto reason, and, as it were, framed to my particular devotion, as this whereof I hold my belief—the Church of England." To make what is framed to one's particular devotion the criterion of religion's truth would be of course to start at the wrong end, to make the human the measure of the divine; to choose a religion because of its congruity

[5] Karl Pfleger, *Wrestlers with Christ*, p. 291.

with one's particular predilections or characteristics, or indeed with those of a race or nation, would be to make religion void. There can never be any question of trying to force the revelation of God into consonance with human ideas. But given the revelation and the principles it involves, a relationship of *de iure* congruity is established from which practical conclusions may in fact be drawn. If the supernatural is the sanctification of the human, and the human not in the abstract but in the concrete, then it implies the sanctification of the proper characteristics of the various races and nations. It implies the utilizing in the service of God of precisely those customs which are framed to their particular devotion. It would, then, be mistaken to suppose that by working to make catholic worship in England more English we should be in any sense trying to make religion palatable at the expense of truth. We should be helping to throw open a door—a door, it is true, leading only to the ante-chambers of the Church—which is now in some degree closed. It is easy for us to say that those outside the Church should come in not for the sake of accidentals but for the sake of essentials, and if necessary in spite of accidentals: that will not excuse us from responsibility if the approaches, the *preambula*, are made unduly difficult. To give catholicism an alien shroud is to give it the appearance precisely of un-catholicity, of a particularity in space and time and an exclusiveness which deny divinity. And, to repeat, it is a question of more than mere policy. "In my Father's house there are many mansions." The rebirth of a specifically English manner of catholic worship would add a new enrichment to the many-voiced harmony of mankind's homage to God.

CHAPTER 13

Divine Transcendence and Sorrow

"CAN THERE be an heroic humanism?"[1] This is to ask in effect whether christian humanism is possible, a humanism which is not merely compatible with sanctity, but which without sanctity, without the grace of God, finds itself meaningless and impotent. But the adjective is significant. Heroism implies a more than human effort, a strain therefore, a tension; and the persistent presence of tension implies for the christian humanist two outstanding dangers: forgetfulness of divine transcendence, forgetfulness of irremediable human sorrow.

The things that are seen have a directness of appeal to the heart that the greater glories miss for being hidden in the obscurities of faith. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. . . ." "It remains then," wrote John of St Thomas, "that the captive soul, bound in the bonds of faith to its clouded object, can be illumined only by the flame of love."[2] And there is no mysticism without tears. "I sought him whom my soul loveth, I sought him and found him not." But the beauty that is not God is ever present, and pulls at the heart to such purpose as to become a potential rival of divinity. So the discovery of God often entails a first reaction against the things which before had distracted attention from the search for him. "'And not only pagan literature,' says Paulinus of Nola, 'but the whole sensible appearance of things (*omnes rerum temporalium species*) is the lotus flower; so men forget their own land, which is God, the country of us all.' 'The whole sensible appearance of things'—it is the mystic's dread, buddhist or christian, of

[1] Maritain; *Humanisme Intégral*, p. 11.

[2] Comment. in *Sum. Theol.* I. II. xviii, 2, 14.

the Great Illusion, and in a single sentence Paulinus has pierced to the secret antagonism, deeper than any occasional wantonness or cult of the gods, between the old poets and the new faith, has revealed unconsciously that which is at once the weakness and strength of Latin literature, its absorption in the actual."[3] True, there is between buddhist and christian mysticism a fundamental difference. In the latter, as Miss Evelyn Underhill has shown, " we find inclusion rather than subtraction : a growing intuitive conviction that the One shall justify rather than exclude the many, that the life of spirit shall involve the whole man in all his activities and correspondences. The mounting soul carries the whole world with it; the cosmic cross-bearer is its true type. It does not abandon, it re-makes : declaring that the ' glory of the lighted mind ', once he has attained to it, will flood the totality of man's nature, lighting up the World of Becoming, and exhibiting not merely the unknowable character of the ' Origin of all that Is ', but the knowable and immediate presence of that Immanent Spirit in whom ' we live and move and have our being '. As the heightening of mental iife reveals to the intellect deeper and deeper levels of reality, so with that movement towards enhancement of the life of spirit which takes place along this path, the world assumes not the character of illusion but the character of sacrament; the spirit finds Spirit in the lilies of the field, no less than in the Unknowable Abyss. True there is here too a certain world-reducing element; for the spiritual life is of necessity a growth, and all growth represents a renunciation as well as an achievement. . . . But that which is here renounced is merely a low level of correspondences. . . . The sometimes sterile principle of ' world-denial ' is here found united with the ever-fruitful principle of ' world-renewal ' : and thus the essential quality of Life, its fecundity and spontaneity, is safeguarded, a ' perennial inner movement ' is assured." " It is this attitude, this handling of the stuff of life, which

[3] Helen Waddell: *Wandering Scholars,* p. xiv.

is *new* in the spiritual history of the race: this which marks christian mysticism as a thing totally different in kind from the mysticism of India or of the neoplatonists." "The *whole man* raised to heroic levels, 'his head in Eternity, his feet in Time', never losing grasp of the totality of the human, but never ceasing to breathe the atmosphere of the divine; this is the ideal held out to us."[4]

Fear of the "lotus flower" then is not the characteristic of christian mysticism: but it is an element in it, for it emphasizes a danger which man must face if he is not to risk a denial of himself. "To propose to a man no more than what is human, Aristotle remarked, is to betray man, to will his unhappiness, for by the principal part of himself, the spirit, he is called to something greater than a merely human life."[5] Rather the dissatisfaction of Socrates than satisfied piggery; but it is the appeal of piggery which pursues us against our better minds.

That the denial of the christian ideal of humanism is a menace to humanism is the verdict of history. Integrity is, to use M. Maritain's terms, theocentricity; humanism emptied itself when it became anthropocentric and abandoned God. "Three aspects or moments, inseparably linked together, can be distinguished in what might be called the dialectic of modern culture." There is a first moment when "civilization gives lavishly its finest fruits, forgetful of the roots from which the sap rises, and is expected to establish by the power of reason alone a human order conceived according to the christian pattern which preceding ages have handed down but which has become forced and is beginning to disintegrate . . . the moment of christian naturalism. During the second moment it becomes clear that a culture separated from the supreme supernatural norms must necessarily take sides against them; its duty is to free man from the superstition of revealed religions, and to open to his natural goodness a perspective of perfect

[4] E. Underhill: *The Mystic Way*, pp. 31-2, 94-5.

[5] Maritain, *op. cit.* p. 10.

security attained by the spirit of wealth accumulating the good things of earth . . . the moment of rationalist optimism. . . . There is thirdly the moment of materialist reversal of values, the revolutionary moment, when man definitely makes himself his last end, and, unable to support any longer a mechanist world, fights a desperate battle to bring out of racial atheism a new humanity." The same process can be followed in regard to the idea of God. The first moment takes as its end " the domination of man over matter : God becomes the guarantor of this domination. . . . This is the God of Descartes." The second moment hopes to " create, thanks to physico-mathematical science, a material world in which man may find according to Descartes' promise a perfect felicity. God becomes an idea. . . . Divine transcendence is rejected in favour of a philosophy of immanence. With Hegel, God becomes the ideal limit of the development of the world and of humanity." The third moment brings " the death of God, which Nietzsche will feel it his terrible mission to announce ". Striving to rule over Nature without remembering the fundamental laws of his own nature, man becomes more and more forced to subject himself, his mind, his life, not to human, but to technical exigencies."[6]

Christian humanism will not adopt the easy way of avoiding this danger of annihilating God and itself by denying the things he has made and the self-perfection he has set before man as a goal. But it recognizes the infinite disparity between the two allegiances regarded not (as in theory they must be) as identified but (as in practice they often are) as divided. It recognizes that, while not incompatible but on the contrary complementary, the realities of heaven and earth are as far removed from one another as the infinite span of analogy can make them. It avoids the danger of belittling God, by laying final stress on his infinite transcendence.

" In England, you see," H. G. Wells's Mr Britling re-

[6] Maritain, *op. cit.* pp. 38-42.

marked, " we have domesticated everything. We have even domesticated God." Bishop Kirk, in a sermon on the text of Job, " Canst thou draw out Leviathan with an hook or his tongue with a cord that thou lettest down?" commented: " We attempt to evade the immensities of religion by domesticating, not merely Leviathan, but God himself. Not till we have reversed the process shall we be in a position to substantiate the christian claim that Christ ' makes all things new ". All serious movements in modern theology are emphasizing this fact. They bid us discard that unwholesome familiarity with God which has reduced him to the level of a *famulus*—a household mascot; and start instead by laying all our emphasis upon his utter greatness and distinction from all things human, and upon the light unapproachable in which he dwells. They bid us, without surrendering one atom of our love for the humanity of Christ, to dwell first upon the truth that he is very God of very God, begotten of his Father before all worlds. And they are right. Only so shall we be in a position to understand the genius of the christian religion . . . and instead of bringing God down to our own level we shall set ourselves, by the help of grace, to raise ourselves to his."[7]

Christian humanism will not share the suspicions of a Peter Damian or a Bernard of Clairvaux with regard to philosophy, still less accept the radical anti-rationalism of Luther. The devil, said Peter Damian, was the first grammarian. And look what use he made of the matter, teaching our first parents to decline God in the plural—Ye shall be as gods—and so making his first grammar lesson an instruction in polytheism.[8] The saint's remarks on other profane sciences are more highly coloured. At the other extreme is the rationalism which will allow of no limitations or dependence upon a higher guidance but seeks to " establish a human order by reason alone "; this, also, christian humanism denounces, finding both a crown and a corrective

[7] Kirk: *The Fourth River*, pp. 67-8.

[8] Gilson: *Christianisme et Philosophie*, p. 13.

to rational speculation in the supernatural revelation of God. "There are, as in philosophy, so in divinity, sturdy doubts, and boisterous objections, wherewith the unhappiness of our knowledge too nearly acquainteth us. More of these no man hath known than myself; which I confess I conquered, not in a martial posture, but on my knees."[9] St Thomas too found refuge, when reason failed, in prayer; but to a different purpose. For where Sir Thomas Browne found strength to accept insoluble antimony and to quell reason as an enemy of faith, he on the contrary found light to resolve antinomy and illumine reason to the understanding of faith. But there is no question of comprehending the Incomprehensible. The thomist theologian, like the mystic, is agnostic—an agnosticism *per excessum*, not *per defectum*.[10] "*Infinitum excelsum Creatoris*—Maimonides himself has not proclaimed the transcendence of the Infinite with greater force and insistence than St Thomas."[11] Negation is "the corner-stone of his teaching about God"[12]. "We begin, he says, by excluding everything material from God: then we must set aside every perfection, even the most spiritual, which exists in creatures. There remains in the spirit nothing but the revelation of the Burning Bush; and we call God *Him Who Is*, understanding by that, with Damascene, an ocean of limitless substance. . . . But this 'existence' itself means for us something created, and we must strip our thought yet further. So we enter into the dark night, to unite ourselves, in wise ignorance, to him who inhabits the darkness."[13] We should do injustice to St Thomas were we to leave the matter there; to neglect the richness of discovery which his other approaches to the light inaccessible open out to us and the flood of light which his doctrine of analogy has shed on reason's search for God. But his insistence on the fact that "at the end of our

[9] *Religio Medici*, I. 19.

[10] Pénido: *Le Rôle de l'Analogie en Théologie Dogmatique*, p. 184.

[11] *ibid.* p. 176. [12] *ibid.* p. 109. [13] *ibid.* p. 113.

search we establish—not now as an initial postulate but as a final and definitive conclusion—that we know about God not what he is but rather what he is not " is a salutary corrective. The possibility of a pride of reason which in effect takes divinity from God is paralleled by the possibility of a pride which excludes his claims as ultimate motive force and judge of our behaviour. We may build up an edifice of perfection according, as we conceive, to the divine pattern, only to find to our bewilderment and perhaps indignation that it comes crashing down upon us, that it was a house of cards. Perhaps then, we have to admit, our efforts were vitiated from the start by pride; perhaps the effort we were making towards self-perfection was but a masked way to self-destruction, since, under cloak of God's service, we were in reality serving only ourselves. There is, at the end, but one prayer and one principle—the last words of the *Religio Medici*—" Thy will be done, though in my own undoing ". For christian eudemonism knows that it is safest in God's hand, secure, there alone, from the danger of self-deception :

In darkness and in safety
By the secret ladder disguised
O happy lot!
In darkness and concealment
My house being now at rest.

The dark night of the soul is the necessary and the happy, confident prologue to the light of union, agnostic and dumb *per excessum* because recognizing that all the things that can be said, all the vastness of theological speculation and all the findings of faith, are lost in the greatness of what is unknown but is one day to be discovered.

The fact that humanism is ready, on its own principles, to sell all it has at the call of Christ, knowing that therein will be its truest fulfilment, throws light on the second danger which threatens a too superficial acceptance of its

principles. We shall deny those principles and at the same time do hurt to christianity if we allow ourselves to forget for a moment the dead weight of sorrow and pain in the world. The problem of evil has an answer of a sort in philosophical speculation. The leibnitzian solution, that everything is somehow or another for the best in the best of all possible worlds, was demolished once and for all by the irony of Voltaire; nor can we espouse the equally unsatisfactory policy of saying that everything is for the best in the worst of all possible worlds, which would mean the passive acceptance of all the evil which confronts us. But we can see a purpose in the ascetical value of suffering, in the value of evil in opening our minds to the idea of good. Theology is necessary to carry further these partial and unsatisfactory solutions of the problem, for there is no adequate answer outside the Cross. This christian answer was beautifully expressed in Tyrrell's *Nova et Vetera*. "We need not, however, suppose that antecedent to the forevision of the Fall an Incarnation had been decreed; but may believe that God, casting about, so to say, in the infinite resources of his divine intellect and power, for an order of things which should manifest his attributes, chose that in which his mercy and generosity would be displayed more fully. He chose, rather than the contrary, that world in which the race, engraced and elevated, would cast away its privileges; in which iniquity should abound that grace might superabound; in which his good gifts would be despised, squandered, abused, not merely by some, but by most; in which his richest schemes of mercy would be thwarted by man's perversity; in which he would gladly spend himself and be spent, though the more he loved, the less he would be loved; in which, in a word, his labour should be largely in vain, his love largely unreturned. For plainly this is the showing forth of a far more prodigal and wonderful love, a love of the undeserving and unthankful. Had all men used his graces, what should we have known of his tender mercies, fullness of compassion, long

suffering, and great goodness? We should have known Christ, but not Jesus; the King, but not the Saviour."[14]

That it was not the intention of God that man should acquiesce passively in the evil with which always and in every age he is confronted, is clear from the person of our Lord himself. The Cross and Passion are succeeded by and have their meaning in the Resurrection; he died in vain, St Paul tells us, if he rose not from the dead; for his sufferings were not passive acquiescence in evil but its defeat, the Cross not ultimately a tragedy but a triumph. And if we are to "fill up what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ" it is to the continuance of this battle with evil that we are called. Keats found at times "the creation of beauty . . . an impertinence in the face of anguish";[15] there is, at a superficial reading, an emptiness and vanity and heartless unreality in the idea of humanism when we are faced with the pain and suffering with which the world is full. It would indeed be a superficial reading of the humanist theory so to regard it, for the fact that man is a political animal, with all the social duties which that fact implies, is central to the humanist idea. Yet we know the depths to which our culture has fallen in this respect. Tagore warned the Japanese against "christian civilization"; the buddhists and brahmins at a Religious Congress in Chicago said that "after an experience of two hundred years we see that your life is a complete contradiction to what you preach, that you are led not by the spirit of Love but by the spirit of self-seeking and brute force"[16]. We cannot put down the failure of christendom entirely to the fact that humanism has become degraded, has ceased to be christian; the trouble is that we christians have lost the very humanity of the christian faith. Again, even when our social conscience is so far aroused as to make us bestir ourselves in the cause of the needy, there is a danger, which

[14] *Nova et Vetera*, LXXXIV.

[15] Helen Waddell: *The Desert Fathers*, p. 20.

[16] Cf. Stratmann: *The Church and War*, p. 42.

history has shown to be only too real, that humanism may turn into humanitarianism, and that the christian duty of serving the poor as representatives of Christ may be replaced by a complacent and un-christian condescension. "Look not for whales in the Euxine" said Sir Thomas Browne; we should not look for a radical christian reform of the social structure from politicians or bureaucrats. Yet we cannot acquiesce in a policy of tinkering with the surface of national or international wrongs while neglecting entirely the fundamentals.

It remains that with the best will in the world we cannot expect to see the redress of every wrong, the conquest of every sort of physical and social evil in the world, achieved in a day or a year. When we have done all that can be done by us, when, above all, we have made it clear that the will at least is not wanting, even though our efforts are not crowned with much success, then we can and ought to turn to a last problem with which humanism must be concerned: the resolution of the antinomy between the infinite transcendence and the infinite compassion of God, for we can then hope without fear of dishonesty and escapism to show that the *lama sabachthani* of the oppressed is not without its divine reply.

"Christ had compassion on the multitude." We are right to think of the Incarnation as God's way of making it possible for himself to suffer with mankind, to bridge the gulf between his own transcendence and our human misery. In the Godhead there is no change, in the divine beatitude there is no sorrow; yet we can say with truth that God suffered and God had compassion, God died for man, since Christ is God and what was done by the humanity of Christ was done by God. These things, however, we might be tempted to argue, are past; they occurred two thousand years ago; and sorrow is best consoled by a present sympathy. Are we to say that God, having once shown his compassion and shared in the sufferings of mankind, is now retired into his eternal beatitude in which there can be no

admixture of sorrow, and so shows compassion, in the etymological sense at least, no more?

Happily, that very transcendence which makes God so remote affords proof that this is not the case. To God's eternity there is no yesterday or to-morrow; we say that on this or that day the world came to be, Christ was born, Christ died, but these events are not dated in his divinity, the action of creation or incarnation from the side of God is eternal with him, and the coming to be of the human facts involved denotes no change in his immutability. So we say that on this or that day Christ, in his human nature, began to sorrow or suffer, but what does this imply in the Godhead?

"Let us consider what eternity is. For this declareth unto us both the divine nature and knowledge. Eternity therefore is a perfect possession altogether of an endless life, which is more manifest by the comparison of temporal things, for whatsoever liveth in time, that being present proceedeth from times past to times to come, and there is nothing placed in time which can embrace all the space of its life at once. But it hath not yet attained to-morrow and hath lost yesterday. And you live no more in this day's life than in that movable and transitory moment. Wherefore whatsoever suffereth the condition of time, although, as Aristotle thought of the world, it never began nor were ever to end, and its life did endure with infinite time, yet it is not such that it ought to be called everlasting. For it doth not comprehend and embrace all the space of its life together, though that life be infinite, but it hath not the future time which is yet to come. That then which comprehendeth and possesseth the whole fullness of an endless life together, to which neither any part to come is absent, nor any of that which is past hath escaped, is worthy to be accounted everlasting. . . . Wherefore, if we will give things their right names, following Plato, let us say that God is everlasting and the world perpetual. Wherefore, since every judgement comprehendeth

those things which are subject to it, according to its own nature, and God hath always an everlasting and present state, his knowledge also surpassing all motions of time, remaineth in the simplicity of his presence, and comprehending the infinite spaces of that which is past and to come, considereth all things in simple knowledge as though they were now in doing. So that, if thou wilt weigh his foreknowledge with which he discerneth all things, thou wilt more rightly esteem it to be the knowledge of a never fading instant than a fore-knowledge as of a thing to come."[17]

Boethius, waiting for death in Theodoric's dungeon, wrote of infinity with a depth and grandeur which no writer has surpassed; and scholastic thinkers, doing violence to language in their effort to imprison his thought in a phrase, defined the eternal in terms of a *nunc stans*, a standing moment; for we tend to imagine eternity as the infinite prolongation of a line of time whereas in reality we should conceive it as a point. The man at this moment existing is not more present to God than is the child that he was or the dust that he is to be. Calvary is as present to him now as it was two thousand years ago. And the will to compassion which brought it about is part of the eternal " never fading instant "; it is not past as it was never future but is, so to say, part of God's immutable nature. Now there is comfort in the material sharing of pain; the boy in his schoolroom finds his punishments easier if he is not alone in them; but this sort of sharing is not what we mean by compassion. Rather we mean the presence in another of the *will* to share in suffering, and it is precisely this will to compassion which is ever-present in God. The fact that Christ in his sufferings fought evil and overcame it means for us the duty of fighting with him, strong in the belief that at the end the victory will be complete; but the promise of a far-off triumph is cold comfort to present affliction, and it is right that we should draw greater strength from the

[17] Boethius: *Consolat. Philosoph.*, V, 6.

thought of the infinite condescension of the divine transcendence, the present will to share in the very worst that human life can bring.

There is another thing to consider: the existence of what the mystic Julian of Norwich called the "love-longing" of Christ. What does the phrase mean? And is "longing" compatible with beatitude?

"For as verily as there is a property in God of ruth and pity, so verily there is a property in God of thirst and longing. . . . And this property of longing and thirst cometh of the endless goodness of God, even as the property of pity cometh of his endless goodness. And though his longing and pity are two sundry properties, as to my sight, in this standeth the point of the Spiritual Thirst: which is *desire in him as long as we be in need,* drawing us up to his bliss."

"Therefore this is his thirst and love-longing, to have us altogether whole in him, to his bliss."[18]

Pedestrian theology is often hard put to it to keep pace with the eagle-soaring of the mystics. Mystical knowledge is free of the fetters of reason. It is not the result of a logical process: it is the result of a perception which comes of immediate contact; it is what theologians call supra-conceptual knowledge,[19] a knowledge which, while still stopping far short of vision, for we are always in the domain of faith in this life, yet goes far beyond, far deeper than the knowledge with which faith supplies us. For it pierces to the very Godhead by the power of charity and of that

[18] Julian, Anchoress of Norwich: *Revelations of Divine Love, The Thirteenth Revelation,* Ch. XXXI.

[19] That is to say, what the mystics learn is (sometimes) not circumscribed or defined in an intellectual concept or idea as is the case in the ratiocinative processes of thought; somewhat similarly to an aesthetic intuition or to that indefinable understanding of persons which is the fruit of sympathy with them, mystical knowledge comes of a supernatural sympathy, a "connaturality" with God in charity, and cannot be defined or adequately expressed in concepts or words. Hence the difficulty the mystics have found in describing their mystical experiences, and the obscurities in their writings.

wisdom, the gift of the holy Spirit, which flows from charity. Such a perception is on a different plane from the rational processes of the philosopher or the theologian. They must toil in order to reach by their reasoned way the results achieved in a moment of quasi-intuition by the mystic.

Their object is demonstrable, demonstrated certitude. They must find rational justification for the mystic's affirmations.

Can we find a theological explanation of the words of Mother Julian quoted above?

The difficulty is clear. Reason will ask: how is it possible that there can be in our Lord in heaven this quality of thirst and longing? There cannot be suffering now in Christ. Mother Julian herself goes on to say that this property of longing is in Christ, not as God—for "anent the Godhead, he is himself bliss, and was, from without beginning, and shall be without end: which endless bliss may never be heightened nor lowered in itself"—but as man, "for anent that Christ is our Head, he is glorified and impassible," yet "anent his Body in which all his members are knit, he is not yet fully glorified nor all impassible."[20]

But how can there be even in the human nature of Christ, since it is beatified, this quality of longing which would seem to imply a privation, a lack of perfect happiness, while beatitude is necessarily the fulfilment of all desires, the possession of perfect bliss? "The same desire and thirst he had upon the Cross . . . the same hath he yet, and shall have unto the time that the last soul that shall be saved is come up to his bliss."[21]

St Thomas will provide us with an answer to the difficulty. In an article in the *Summa*, "Whether the body be required for the beatitude of man?". St Thomas puts to himself this difficulty: "beatitude fulfils every desire; but the soul in its state of separation from the body

[20] *ibid.* [21] *ibid.*

longs to be united again to it; hence beatitude is impossible for a separated soul"[22].

He answers by making a distinction. The desire of the soul, he says, is wholly set at rest as far as the *object desired* is concerned, for the soul possesses that which is sufficient to satisfy every desire; but it is not set wholly at rest as far as the *subject desiring* is concerned, for it does not as yet possess that object in every way it could wish. And so, when the soul is reunited to the body, beatitude is increased, not intensively but extensively.

This answer is, at first sight, not very satisfactory. St Thomas's distinction seems to give away too much. His contention was that beatitude was impossible so long as the soul's desire was not fully set at rest, and he seems now to admit that it is not fully set at rest, and the difficulty remains. What use, one wonders, is it to allow that beatitude is present objectively to the soul, an object sufficient certainly to satisfy every desire, if in fact the soul still remains imperfectly happy, its desires not completely fulfilled? For when we speak of the soul's beatitude we are apt to think chiefly of the perfect bliss of the *subject*. Have we got any further? We imagine a man who should have in this life the means of satisfying every desire, but whom bodily pain, for example, should prevent from enjoying his good fortune. Who could call him perfectly happy?

We shall find further enlightenment in another passage from the *Summa*,[23] in which St Thomas asks whether hope remains after death, in heaven. "The souls of the blessed" he says there, "cannot be said to hope for glory of their bodies but only to desire it"; and the reason for this is that the glory desired for the body is not hard to attain because it has an "inevitable cause". Thus, while it remains true that there is in the souls of the blessed a desire which is as yet unfulfilled, that desire is not incompatible with beatitude because they see that it will infallibly be fulfilled.

[22] I. II. iv, 5, obj. 5. [23] I. II. lxvii, 4, ad 3.

Desire is different from hope. Hope implies difficulties and obstacles in obtaining something which is possible but as yet unrealized; desire means a longing for what is not present, but a longing the fulfilment of which may be known to be inevitable and requiring no effort; thus in heaven the heart desires and yet is at rest since it knows that its desire will be effortlessly fulfilled.

Yet still a difficulty seems to remain. Perfect bliss, one might well argue, demands that desire be wholly set at rest as regards both the subject desiring and the object desired. Let us admit that desire for one thing does not prevent happiness in another: still the subject will not have arrived at that perfect bliss which beatitude surely demands till *all* its desires are fulfilled.

We must have recourse again to St Thomas. He distinguishes between "essential" and "concomitant" beatitude: essential beatitude consists in the vision of God; concomitant beatitude includes all those secondary joys which, together with essential beatitude, go to make up that "aggregate of all good things" which is beatitude in its widest and fullest sense. Now the soul separated from the body enjoys the essential beatitude of heaven, the sight of God. But it does not enjoy to the full that concomitant beatitude in which are included all those joys other than the Godhead itself, which go to make up the complete bliss of heaven, such as the fellowship of the saints, the company of those we love, the glory of the body. Hence, though "the soul separated from the body does not as yet possess perfect bliss, inasmuch as its desire is not as yet wholly set at rest"[24], still it can and does enjoy beatitude, for it is in complete possession of the essential happiness which is the vision of God.

To answer our original difficuly, therefore, we can now say: that the desires of the souls of the blessed are not so completely satisfied by the vision of God as to exclude any movement of desire within them; but this desire is not in-

[24] *Contra Gent.* IV, lxxix.

compatible with beatitude because, first, it is known as infallibly to be fulfilled, it has an " inevitable cause " and thus excludes the necessity for hope; and secondly because it is a desire for concomitant beatitude which does not exclude the perfect possession and enjoyment of essential beatitude.

It must be noted that this does not in any way destroy the strength or depth of desire: the tumult, doubt, anxiety which we are often inclined to consider part of our desires on earth are in fact quite extraneous to them; the expectancy, the longing for fulfilment of a desire which we know is to be realized soon is no less deep than it would be were it accompanied by the anxiety we experience if the fulfilment is uncertain. The soul's longing is equally intense, but it is calm, untroubled, serene, because it has confidence in the " inevitable cause ".

We must imagine then, not a man with all the means of realizing every desire but prevented from the enjoyment of that realization by bodily pain, but a man blest, let us say, with every gift of fortune, who desires only to share those gifts with one he loves, and who knows moreover that this last desire will infallibly (we imagine such a certitude possible) soon be realized. He has no reason now merely to hope: he has this one desire which he knows is to be fulfilled, and by the fulfilment his joy will at last be completed. So the souls of the blessed possess perfect beatitude—the vision of God—while at the same time there remains within them a longing for union with their bodies, to share with them an everlasting glory: a peaceful longing since they know that what they desire will, in God's good time, be granted them, for the glory of their bodies has an " inevitable cause ".

This teaching must now be set beside and applied to the doctrine of the mystical Body of Christ, of which we have seen Mother Julian already speaking.

" And he has subjected all things under his feet and hath made him head over all the Church which is his body and

the fullness of him who is filled all in all." St Thomas, commenting on these lines from the *Epistle to the Ephesians,* writes: "The body is made for the soul and not the soul for the body, and in this way the natural body is in some sense a fullness of the soul. For unless it have the body and all its members the soul cannot fully exercise its functions. So it is with Christ and the Church.[25] And because the Church was instituted for Christ it is said to be the fullness of him, that is, that all things which are virtually found in Christ may be fulfilled in some sense in his members."[26]

It would seem then that the doctrine concerning the desire of the soul for the body may truly be applied to the blessed humanity of Christ and explain the words of Mother Julian. The soul, as St Thomas says again, "longs for the body as the companion of its sufferings and merits, that it may have with it its consolation and reward"[27]. Does not Christ long for us who are his Body, that "if we suffer with him . . . we may also be glorified with him?" For "we be his bliss, we be his meed, we be his worship, we be his crown."[28]

Our Lord's wonderful story of the prodigal son teaches us this same deep truth, portraying for us the love of a father who gives up unmurmuring half his fortune, who can hardly wait for the asking of pardon, the humble speech timidly rehearsed, but runs, all pride forgotten, to meet the prodigal; who, most significantly of all, rebukes the faithful brother in whom we are to see those whose justice is accurate and whose service faithful but whose outlook is material and whose righteousness cannot find sympathy for the sorrow that can overcome the sinner; rebukes

[25] This argument must not, of course, be taken as implying that Christ risen and glorified is like a "separated" soul in the sense of lacking anything of his own perfection or completion: he wants, desires, his mystical body, the completion of his work, not because of any lack in himself but because of his pity, his *misericordia* and compassion, for the lack in us.

[26] Comment. on *Ep. to Ephesians,* I, 23, lect. viii.

[27] Comment IV. *Sent.* XLIX, xi, 1. [28] Julian, *loc. cit.*

him for not realizing the sorrow of separation: "Son, thou art always with me". God, whose very being is beatitude, must point out to man the sorrow of separation from the sinner—the longing of his love.

The human nature of Christ still has something not to hope for but to desire: the heart of God in heaven longs for the fulfilment of glory of his Mystical Body, that fulfilment whereof his merits are the "inevitable cause"; longs to set upon us the stole of glory, *ut gaudio compleantur corda nostra et gaudium eius sit plenum*: that our hearts may rejoice and *his* joy may be filled.

"Thus he hath ruth and compassion on us, and he hath longing to have us; but his wisdom and his love suffereth not the end to come till the best time."

To put considerations such as these of the divine compassion before the oppressed while showing ourselves plainly acquiescent in the evils which oppress them would be an inhuman escapism, a treacherous denial of the Cross. And we may well hesitate to speak of the "creation of beauty in the face of anguish", and feel ourselves obliged to speak only of the creation of justice. Yet there is in the poor a grandeur of soul, a "heroic humanism" (for humanism, though it demands a certain material environment for its flowering, is primarily in the soul), for which beauty is the deserved setting; and when we can do no more in the way of human endeavour to bring this setting about in our world it is right that we should emphasize the divine promise of a final adjustment in which that grandeur will find its proper expression, the coming of a time when "God will wipe away the tears from the eyes of the saints, and there shall be neither mourning nor weeping nor any sorrow; for the former things"—the poverty and pain and labours of this present life—"shall have passed away".

THE END

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